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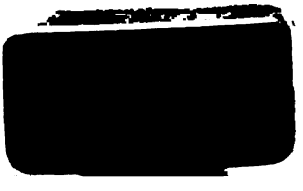

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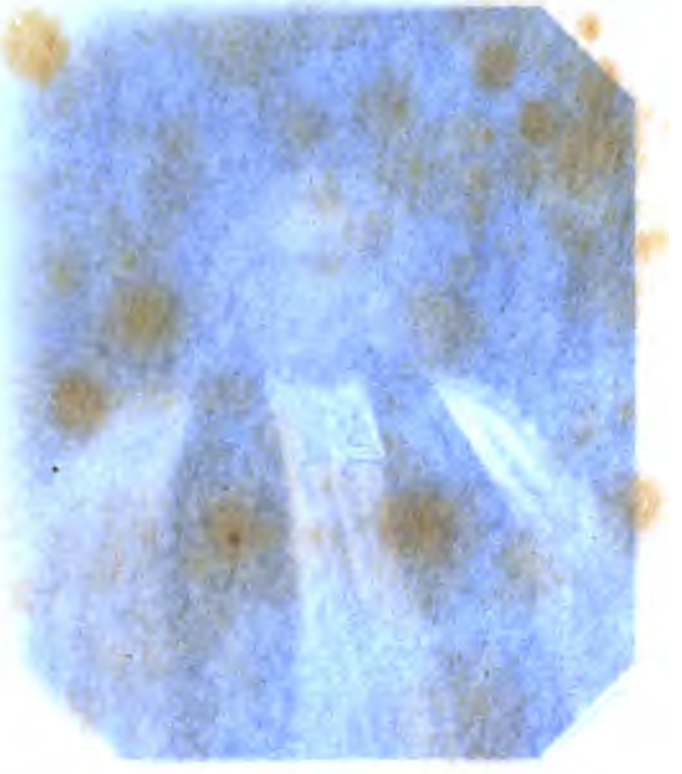

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THE

WORKS

OF THE

RIGHT REVEREND

GEORGE HORNE, D.D.

LATE

LORD BISHOP OF NORWICH;

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED

MEMOIRS OF HIS LIFE, STUDIES,

AND

WRITINGS.

BY WILLIAM JONES, M.A., F.R.S.

ONE OF HIS LORDSHIP'S CHAPLAINS,

AND LONG HIS MOST INTIMATE AND CONFIDENTIAL FRIEND.

VOL. I.

New York:

HENRY M. ONDERDONK, & CO.,

CHURCH PUBLISHING AND BOOKSELLING ESTABLISHMENT, 25 JOHN STREET.

1846.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

In presenting this uniform edition of the Works of the late truly excellent and pious Dr. Horne, it may be necessary to premise, that the reader is not to expect that it shall contain an entire collection of his writings.* Some of his juvenile essays and controversial tracts are omitted, because, however amusing or useful at the time they were written, they would contribute but little to the stock of public information in the present day. Nor, although they might not materially diminish, could they add much to a reputation derived from those mature labors which have been so long sanctioned by public approbation, and are eminently calculated to promote that vital and practical Christianity, which was ever nearest the author's heart, and ever animated his tongue and pen.

Dec. 1808.

* In this American reprint there have been added several discourses not included in any other edition of Bishop Horne's Works.—Am. Pub.

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LETTERS ON INFIDELITY.
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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

OF

MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE OF DR. HORNE, &c.

1799.

In publishing the Memoirs of the Life of Dr. Horne, my intention was only to give a true idea of that good man, as it presented itself to my memory and affections, and to produce an edifying book, rather than a formal history. I flatter myself it has done some good; and I hope it may do more. If any offence has been given, I can only say it was no part of my plan: but it is a common fault with plain Christians, who know little of the world, to tell more truth than is wanted; and they have nothing left but a good conscience, to support them under the mistake.

Some few exceptions have been made to the performance by little cavillers, which are not worth mentioning: but I brought myself into the most serious difficulty of all, by representing bishop Horne as a *Hutchinsonian*; which thing, it seems, ought not to have been done; as it was strongly suggested to me, from the late learned Dr. Farmer, while my work was in hand. On this matter I beg leave to explain myself a little. I never said, nor did I ever think, that bishop Horne owed everything to *Hutchinson*, or was his implicit follower. I knew the contrary: but this I will say, because I know it to be true, that he owed to him the *beginning* of his extensive knowledge; for such a beginning as he made placed him on a new spot of high ground; from which he took all his prospects of religion and learning; and saw that whole road lying before him, which he afterwards pursued, with so much pleasure to himself, and benefit to the world. This declaration, however clear it may be to me, is more than some of my readers will be willing to admit, or able to bear. I perceive, by what has been written, that, if it can be effected, bishop Horne must be taken away from the Hutchinsonians: or, if that cannot be done, his character must not be *set too high*; we must beware of *exaggeration*; he must be represented as *good* and *pious*, rather than *wise* or *great*. This comes not from the *truth*, but from the *times*: and it is what we must expect to hear, till the times shall alter, and a few stumbling-blocks shall be removed out of the way. After what I had related, with so little disguise, concerning the early studies of Dr. Horne, I could foresee that his character, excellent as it is, had a fiery trial to pass: I therefore prepared myself to see—what I have seen.

But, while I heard some things which were unpleasant, I heard others which gave me encouragement. For, though it was commonly reported that I had bestowed too many words upon a cause which neither required nor deserved them, one of the wisest men of this age, who is an host of himself, wished I had said more; it being a cause of which the world *heard* much, but *knew* little, and *wanted* to know more. I shall take this opportunity of satisfying their curiosity as faithfully as I can.

But I find myself called upon, by the way, to justify the bishop against an unexpected accusation of a late author, who charges him with *fancifulness* and *presumption*; for what reason, and with how much justice, learning,

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and judgment, we shall see presently: and I am glad this second edition was deferred, because the delay has given me an opportunity of seeing some things of which I ought not to be ignorant.

In a *New Biographical Dictionary*, a life of Dr. Horne is inserted; the author of which speaks of him with as much caution as a man would handle hot coals. For what he is pleased to say of *me*, as a writer of doctor Horne's life, I am much obliged to him; and I think it more than I deserve or desire: but, I should be false to the bishop's memory, were I to allow his account of *him* to be either just or true. He gives him the praise of being a *blameless* man! (cold enough!) when they that have eyes to see, and judgment to discern, must discover him to be, both for matter and manner, one of the first orators and teachers this church can boast; and that he often displays a rich vein of wit, rarely indeed to be found in a man of so much sweetness and good temper. What a poor figure does *Priestley* make in the hands of the *undergraduate!* and the great philosopher *Hume*, in the letter to doctor Adam Smith! Where the bishop is reflected upon, for being a *Hutchinsonian*, it is allowed, nevertheless, that he might be partly right in his natural philosophy; though I do not understand the biographer's method of making it out; and I question whether he understood it himself. But then it is added, that "if he proceeded to a supposed analogy between material and immaterial things, and compared the agency of the Son and Holy Ghost to that of light and air in the natural world; it will surely be thought that he went upon very uncertain and fanciful, not to say presumptuous grounds." I thank him for speaking out. But is this true divinity? Is there then no analogy between things natural and divine? And have I been beating the air, and writing a volume, to prove and explain it, and demonstrate the great use and value of it; and has this author discovered at last, that there is no such thing? How mortifying is it to me to hear, that so much of the labor of my life has been thrown away! This analogy, which he will not suffer bishop Horne to *suppose*, without being *fanciful* and *presumptuous*, has been admitted and insisted upon, as plain and certain, by the best divines of the Christian church; who used it, and admired it, because they found it in the word of God: and it holds particularly in the two great objects of nature, *air* and *light*, where this *modern* divine (for such I suppose him) cannot see it himself, and will not permit us to see it without him. Was not the presence of the divine Spirit, on the day of Pentecost, announced to the senses of men by the "sound of a rushing, mighty wind?" Did not our Saviour, in his discourse with Nicodemus, illustrate the agency of the divine Spirit by that of the natural? "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Why did he communicate the Holy Ghost under the outward sign of *breathing* upon them, if no comparison is to be made between the sign and the thing signified? The word *inspiration*, which is the act of the Holy Ghost, denotes a blowing or breathing as of the air; and the name *Spirit* is common to the natural air and to the Holy Ghost. What is the meaning of all this? Does the word of God make comparisons, and put one thing for another; and shall we say, there is no analogy or likeness; that is, no sense nor propriety in the substitution? That would indeed be presumptuous, if not blasphemous: and the author would not have entangled himself in this manner, if he had not been frightened out of his wits at *Hutchinsonianism*. But, after all, to those who search for it, the analogy must instantly discover itself; and it hath been pointed to us without reserve, by a divine of the *old* school, bishop Andrews; who was in no fear of being called to an account for it by the learned of that age. In his first discourse, on the descent of the Holy Ghost, he has these words: "The wind, which is here the type of the Holy Ghost, doth of all creatures best express it: for, of all bodily things, it is the least bodily, and even invisible, as a spirit is. It is *mighty* or violent; seemingly of little force, and yet of the greatest: but never so vehement as the Spirit is in its proceedings. As the wind serveth for breath, so doth the Spirit give life, and is called the Spirit of life. As it serveth for speech, so doth the Spirit give utterance: and, as the one serveth for sound, so by the other the sound of the apostles went out into all lands." This, and more to the same purpose, saith bishop Andrews; and I call this true divinity: he was in no fear about types and analogies: he finds the analogy as strict as if the air had been created for this use. And what Christian, who reads his Bible, will find fault with bishop Horne, if he thought, and preached, as bishop Andrews did before him? This one was the delight of his times, and the other may continue to be the delight of our times; notwithstanding the censures which have been thrown out against him, with so little experience, that I am ashamed for the author of them.

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The other great object of nature, where the analogy is not permitted to us, is that of the *light:* but it holds in this case as strictly as in the other: for our Saviour calls himself the "true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world;" and a prophet calls him "the sun of righteousness." All the men of this world who have light, have it from the same sun; and all that have the light of life, have it from the same Saviour. And the operations and attributes of the true light in the kingdom of grace are the same as those of the light in the natural world. We took the authority of bishop Andrews in the former example; we may now take that of archbishop Leighton*; who sees the analogy between the natural and divine light:—first, in their *purity;* both are incapable of pollution: secondly, in their *universality;* both are imparted to all, without being diminished: thirdly, in their *vivifying power;* the one raises plants and vegetables from the earth, the other raises men from the dead: fourthly, in their *dispelling darkness;* all shadows fly before the sun; all the types and shadows of the law, all the mists of darkness and idolatry, at the appearance of the other, who is the light of the Gentiles and the glory of Israel; even that glory, which had been so often foreshowed to them: for, as the glory was in their tabernacle and filled it, so the *fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily in Christ:* σκηνωσεν εν ημιν—he *dwelt in a tabernacle* amongst us. Is not this a just and beautiful analogy? And can there be any man of taste, who will not see and admire it? Is the Scripture *fanciful* in teaching it? And is this good bishop *presumptuous* in following it? It is a grief to me to be urging so many questions in so plain a case: but wise men lay us under a cruel necessity, when they are in such a hurry to run away from doctrines, which they call *Hutchinsonian,* without knowing that they have been common to the Christian world; and that every *master in Israel* (supposing this gentleman to be of that character) is expected to have acquired, from a proper study of the Scripture, that experience which makes all these things plain, and enables us to see the spiritual in the natural world; the glass in which (δια, by means of which†) God hath been pleased to show us *that* and *Himself,* till we shall see him face to face; and not, as we do now, by reflection from the objects of nature. All who do not know the use of this grand *speculum,* are under the poverty of ignorance; they lose a great help to their faith, together with a great instrument for the improving of their understanding; at least in spiritual things. What would divinity be, and what can a teacher of it be, without the use of analogies, and the power we acquire when we argue from them? They are so universal in the Scripture, that a man may as well read English without the alphabet, as read the Bible without understanding its analogies. They are, therefore, never to be given up, but to be insisted upon, and recommended to others, as the very life and soul of Christian wisdom.*

I would willingly have avoided a party *name,* being conscious that I am not a party *man,* but disposed to exercise an independent judgment and take what is good and useful from every quarter where I can find it, either for my own benefit or that of the public. If I can do good, I am willing to do it under any character which an honest man may wear. But my adversaries (who are not a few) have found such an advantage, for many years past, in giving me the name of a *Hutchinsonian,* that they will never part with it. So, as I am stamped with that name, I may speak freely, without losing any ground. Too many of the learned have shown an unusual propensity, for many years, to censure and reject every principle reported to be *Hutchinsonian,* without first knowing what it is, and what is to be said for it. The biographer, against whom I have defended bishop *Horne,* attacks him as a Hutchinsonian, without knowing that he was making his attack on that quarter where the Hutchinsonians are strongest; and this, not with weak arguments, but with no arguments at all; unless we can find one in the words—*it will surely be thought*—which is not an argument, but an appeal to the judgment of others who are under the same prejudice with himself. To prevent which for the time to come, and to satisfy those who, having heard some things to perplex them, would be glad of better information; I shall tell them, as well as I can, what the principles really are by which a Hutchinsonian is distinguished from other men. But when I consider, that this inquiry will lead us into some great, deep, and difficult subjects—of which no man can speak worthily—and of which so many have spoken rashly—I tremble at my undertaking; and entreat every wise and good man to make allowances for me, at a stage of life when

*See Sermon V, of archbishop Leighton's eighteen.

† δι' εσοπτρου εν αινιγματι—Though the preposition δια is here used, we do not suppose with our English version that the allusion is to dioptrics, but catoptrics: so εσοπτρον is a *speculum,* wherein things are seen by reflection.

* For the bishop's sentiments on this subject, see the Life, p. 74, 75.

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forces fail and memory is weak, and to give me a fair and charitable hearing.

1. In the first place, the followers of Mr. Hutchinson give to *God* the pre-eminence in everything. *His* authority with them is above all authority: His wisdom above all wisdom: His truth above all truth. They judge everything to be good or bad, wise or foolish, as it promotes or hinders the belief of Christianity. On which account, their first enemies are to be found among sceptics, infidels, and atheists. Their next enemies are those who are afraid of believing too much; such as our Socinians and their confederates, who admit Christianity as a *fact*, but deny it as a *doctrine*.

2. They hold, that only one way of salvation has been revealed to man from the beginning of the world, viz. the way of faith in God, redemption by Jesus Christ, and a detachment from the world, and that this way is revealed in both Testaments.

3. That in both Testaments divine things are explained and confirmed to the understandings of men, by allusions to the natural creation. I say *confirmed;* because the Scripture is so constant and uniform in the use it makes of natural objects, that such an analogy appears between the sensible and spiritual world, as carries with it *sensible evidence* to the truth of revelation; and they think that, where *this* evidence is once apprehended by the mind, no other will be wanted. They are therefore persuaded, it may have great effect towards making men Christians, in this last age of the world; now the original evidence of miracles is remote, and almost forgotten.

4. They are confirmed *Trinitarians*. They became such at their baptism in common with other Christians; and they are kept such by their principles, especially by what is called the *Hutchinsonian philosophy of fire, light, and air*. Nature shows us these three agents in the world, on which all natural life and motion depend: and these three are used in the Scripture to signify to us the three supreme *powers* of the Godhead, in the administration of the spiritual world; notwithstanding the judgment which our new biographer hath passed against them. Let any philosopher show us one single effect, of which it may be proved, that neither fire, light, nor air, contribute to it in any of their various forms.*

5. On the authority of the Scriptures, they entertain so low an opinion of human nature, under the consequences of the fall, that they derive everything in religion from revelation or tradition. A system may be fabricated, and called *natural;* but a *religion* it cannot be; for there never was a religion, among Jews or Gentiles, Greeks, Romans, or Barbarians, since the beginning of the world, without sacrifice and priesthood; of which natural religion having neither, is consequently no religion. The imagination of man, by supposing a religion without these, has done infinite disservice to the only religion by which man can be saved. It has produced the deistical substitution of naked morality, or Turkish honesty, for the doctrines of intercession, redemption, and divine grace. It has no *gift* from God, but that nature which came poor, and blind, and naked out of Paradise; subject only to farther misery,

*To show how differently the same things will appear to different men, and how men of learning, through habits of thinking, may be unprepared to judge of common things, I will mention the example of my own tutor of University College, in Oxford; who, having been persuaded to read a little piece of Duncan Forbes on the system of Hutchinson, (which by the way I would recommend to the reader,) was heard to say "there were some good things and some curious things in it; but *the man raves* when he talks of his *fire, light,* and *spirit*." Now herein is to me a marvellous thing; that Learning, seated in the chair of *Alfred*, should take this doctrine of fire, light, and air to be *raving;* when Ignorance, with a tallow candle in its hand, need only light it, to see them all at work together. Air enters at the bottom, where the flame looks blue: fire and smoke from the snuff are at the top, and the brightest light is about the middle. No man can draw a line between them, or say where one ends and another begins. But here they are certainly; for, without air, the candle goes out: without fire, it will not burn us: and, without light, we shall not see by it. And all this is no theory, but a plain, undeniable matter of fact. How wonderful, that a philosopher cannot see this; when a child or a ploughman may be made to understand it! Two strange events of the same kind are more credible than one. The people among the Jews, who *knew* most, were those who could *see* least.

When the good lord president Forbes wrote his letter from Scotland, there were rocks and mountains in his way; and he had the mortification to see that he prevailed but little. These are now not nearly so formidable as they were then: great and unexpected events have intervened. Infidelity, the grand adversary, hath now overshot its mark; and is found to have in it so much more of the felon than the philosopher, that gentlemen begin to be ashamed of its company. Its opponents are inspired with new zeal, and act with new vigor; as may be seen in two periodical publications of modern date. Attraction is going down; and the demonstration of a *vacuum* is not to be supported; as I shall show in another place. Electricity hath risen up, and given us the knowledge of a new power in nature, which is an object of sense, and may be extended to the whole system of the world. Lord Forbes's letter to a bishop was written with the best intention in the world; but, when a scheme is *new*, and admitted in all its parts, more weight is laid upon some things than they will bear. He tells his reader many curious things, for which I have not room; neither would I choose to introduce them, because they depend on *Hebrew* evidence.

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from its own lusts, and the temptations of the devil. A religion more flattering to the pride of man, pleases his fancy better than this; but it will never do him any good.

Hutchinson himself had so strong a sense of this, that he looked upon natural religion as Deism in disguise; an engine of the devil, in these latter days, for the overthrow of the Gospel; and, therefore, boldly called it *the religion of Satan or Antichrist*. Let the well-informed Christian look about him, and consider whether his words, extravagant as they may seem at first, have not been fully verified. I myself, for one, am so thoroughly persuaded of this, that I determine never to give quarter to natural religion, when it falls in my way to speak of the all-sufficiency of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We know very well how the Scripture is brought in to give its countenance to the notion of a natural religion: but we know also that dark texts are drawn to such a sense, as to render all the rest of the Scripture of no effect; as hath happened in the doctrines of predestination and natural religion; by the former of which we lose the *church*, by the latter its *faith*. Facts bring a dispute to a short issue. If Voltaire were alive, I would be judged by him, whether Christianity hath not been going down ever since natural religion came up. And we know, by what his disciples, the French, have done, that natural religion comes up, when Christianity is put down. These facts teach us that they will not stand long together. Whether they possibly *might* or not, is not worth an inquiry; because he that has got Christianity, may leave natural religion to shift for itself.

6. Few writers for natural religion have shown any regard to the types and figures of the Scripture, or known much about them. But the Hutchinsonians, with the old Christian fathers and the divines of the reformation, are very attentive to them, and take great delight in them. They differ in their nature from all the learning of the world; and so much of the wisdom of revelation is contained in them, that no Christian should neglect the knowledge of them. All infidels abominate them. Lord Bolingbroke calls St. Paul a *Cabbalist* for arguing from them; but the Hutchinsonians are ambitious of being such Cabbalists as St. Paul was.

7. In natural philosophy, they have great regard to the name of *Newton*, as the most wonderful genius of his kind. But they are sure his method of proving a *vacuum* is not agreeable to nature. A vacuum cannot be deduced from the theory of resistances: for, if motion be from impulsion, as Newton himself and some of the wisest of his followers have suspected; then the cause of motion will never resist the motion which it causes. The rule, which is true when applied to *communicated motion*, does not hold when applied to the *motions of nature*. For the motions of nature change from less to more; as when a spark turns to a conflagration: but communicated motion always changes from more to less: so that there is an essential difference between them, and we cannot argue from the one to the other. Mr. Cotes's demonstration, it is well known, is applicable only to communicated motion: I mean, such only as is *violent* or *artificial*. There is no need of a vacuum in the heavens: it is more reasonable and more agreeable to nature that they should be filled with a circulating fluid, which does not hinder motion, but begins it and preserves it.

They cannot allow *inert* matter to be capable (as mind is) of *active* qualities; but ascribe attraction, repulsion, &c., to subtile causes, not immaterial. There may be cases very intricate and difficult; but they take the rule from plain cases, and, supposing nature to be uniform and consistent, they apply it to the rest.

8. In natural history, they maintain, against all the wild theories of infidels, which come up, one after another, like mushrooms, and soon turn rotten, that the present condition of the earth bears evident marks of a universal flood; and that extraneous fossils are to be accounted for from the same catastrophe. Many of them are therefore diligent collectors of fossil bodies, which are valuable to the curious in consideration of their origin.

9. What commonly passes under the name of *learning*, is a knowledge of *Heathen* books: but it should always be admitted with great precaution. For they think of all Heathens, that, from the time when they commenced Heathens, they never worshipped the *true* God, the Maker of heaven and earth; but, instead of him, the elements of the world, the powers of nature, and the lights of heaven: that the love of vice and vanity was the real cause of their ignorance: they did not *know* the true God, because they did not *like* to know him: and that the same passions will give us an inclination to the principles of Heathens, rather than to the principles of Christians; and that most of the ill principles of this age come out of the Heathen school. The favorers of Mr. Hutchinson's scheme are therefore reputed to be the enemies of learning. But they are not so. They are enemies only to the *abuses* of it, and to the corruptions derived from it.

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To all false learning, that is, to human folly affecting to be wisdom, they have indeed a mortal aversion in their hearts, and can hardly be civil to it in their words; as knowing, that the more a man has of false wisdom, the less room there will be for the true. Metaphysics which consist of words without ideas; illustrations of Christian subjects from Heathen parallels; theories founded only on imagination; speculations on the mind of man which yield no solid matter to it, but lead it into dangerous opinions about itself: these and other things of the kind, with which modern learning abounds, they regard as they would the painting of a ghost, or the splitting of an atom.*

10. Of *Jews*, they think that they are the inveterate enemies of Christianity; never to be trusted as our associates either in Hebrew or divinity. No *Philo*, no *Josephus*, no *Talmudist*, is to be depended upon; but suspected and sifted, as dangerous apostates from *true Judaism*. It is plausibly argued, that Jews, as native *Hebrews*, must, like other natives, be best acquainted with their own language. But the case of the Jews is without a parallel upon earth. They are out of their native state; and have an interest in deceiving Christians by every possible means, and depriving them of the evidence of the Old Testament.

11. They are of opinion, that the *Hebrew* is the primeval and original language; that its structure shows it to be divine; and that a comparison with other languages shows its priority.

12. *The Cherubim* of the Scriptures were mystical figures, of high antiquity and great signification. Those of Eden, and of the Tabernacle, and of Ezekiel's vision, all belong to the same original. Irenæus has enough upon them to justify the Hutchinsonian acceptation of them. The place they had in the Holy of Holies, and their use in the sacred ritual, sets them very high. Their appellation, as *Cherubim of glory*,† does the same; and the reasoning of St. Paul, from the shadows of the law to the priesthood of Christ, sets them highest of all; obliging us to infer, that they were symbolical of the divine presence. The τεσσαρα ζωα in the Revelation of St. John (improperly called *beasts*; for one of them was a *man*, and another a *bird*) must be taken for the same: where the figures of the old law bow down and surrender all power and glory to the evangelical figure of the Lamb that was slain. Here the doctrine is thought to labor a little: but, if the ζωα are considered only as figures, the case alters. And, if this great subject should have parts and circumstances not to be understood, we must argue from what *is* understood. They seem to have been known in the Christian church of the first centuries; but not with the help of the *Jews*. So also was the analogy of the three agents (φως, πυρ, πνευμα,) these being expressly mentioned by Epiphanius, as similitudes of the divine Trinty.

In their physiological capacity, so far as we can find, the Cherubim seem never to have been considered before Mr. Hutchinson; who very properly derives from them all *animal-worship* among the Heathens. This subject is of great extent and depth; comprehending a mass of mythological learning, well worthy of a diligent examination.

These things come down to us under the name of *John Hutchinson;* a character *sui generis*, such as the common forms of education could never have produced; and it seems to me not to have been well explained, how and by what means he fell upon things, seemingly so new and uncommon: but we do not inquire *whose* they are, but *what* they are, and what they are good for. If the tide had brought them to shore in a trunk, marked with the initials J. H., while I was walking by the seaside, I would have taken them up, and kept them for use; without being solicitous to know what ship they came out of, or how far, and how long, they had been floating at the mercy of the wind and waves. If they should get from my hands into better hands, I should rejoice; being persuaded they would revive in others the dying flame of Christian faith, as they did in bishop Horne and myself. And why should any good men be afraid of them? There is nothing here that tends to make men troublesome, as heretics, fanatics, sectaries, rebels, or corrupters of any kind of useful learning. All these things a man may believe, and still be a good subject, a devout Christian, and a sound member of the church of England: perhaps more sound, and more useful, than he would have been without them. For myself I may say (as I do in great humilty) that, by following them through the course of a long life, I have found myself much enlightened, much assisted in evidence and argument, and never corrupted; as I hope my writings, if they should last, will long bear me witness. If these principles should come into use with other people, I am confident they would turn Christians into scholars, and scholars into Christians; enabling them to demonstrate, how shallow infidels are in their learning, and how greatly every man is a loser by his ignorance of revelation.

* See more on this subject, p. 48 of the Life.

† Compare Acts, vii. 2. 'Ο Θεος της δοξης.'

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When we are describing Hutchinsonians, it would be unjust to forget, that they are *true churchmen* and *loyalists;* steady in the fellowship of the apostles, and faithful to the monarchy under which they live. This, however, is not from what they find in Hutchinson, though it *is* to be found in him;* but from what he has taught them to find, by taking their principles from the Scripture. Had this man been a splendid character and a great favorite with the world, we might have received his doctrines with our mouths open, and our eyes shut: but our dangers are quite of another kind. From *him* nothing is to be taken upon trust: every thing must be sifted and examined to the uttermost. And so let it; for thus it will be better understood. Prove it well, and hold it fast. Of leaders and guides in learning beware: for, as wisely speaks the author of the *Pursuits of Literature*, they ought, in this age, to be *well watched:* if they fall into dangerous mistakes, many fall with them: and if evil once creeps in, and finds public entertainment, no man can say how or when we shall get rid of it. Such leaders are as watchful against *us* as we ought to be against *them*. They neither *enter in themselves*, nor suffer other people if they can prevent it. Many young men would find employment and amusement for their lives, if the way were open, and they were permitted to inquire for themselves. Here, *free inquiry* would be honorable, safe, and laudable: but discouragements are often thrown in their way; and I have met with some examples of it; one in partular, which made a great impression upon me.

Some years ago I became acquainted with a young man, of bright parts, studious disposition, and a pious turn of mind; in whose conversation I found comfort and pleasure. To such advice as I gave him, in regard to his future studies, he was remarkably attentive. He saw a new field of learning opening to his view, which promised him much profitable employment; and he seemed in haste to enter upon it. As he was intended for the church, I flattered myself he would take some active part in the defence of Christian truth as a writer; together with the advancement of Christian piety as a preacher. With this prospect upon my mind, he left me for many months. But, at his return, I found him totally changed; and I rarely conversed with him but to my disappointment. His mind, which used to be undisguised and open, was now guarded at every pass: and, whatever I proposed as formerly the had now an evasion ready. It seemed as if somebody had hung a bell about my neck, so that I could not stir without raising an alarm. To a man, rather shy of making proselytes, but always pleased to meet with volunteers, fit for the service of God and the church, my situation was distressing. I discovered that my friend was no longer his own man: I guessed at the cause; and gave little trouble afterwards to him or myself. But I lamented, that he had lost a view of things which would have animated him; and, while it found exercise for the best of his talents, would have given strength and effect to all his labors. His pursuits in literature will now most probably be frivolous in themselves, and foreign to his profession as a clergyman. No man will do great things, when he yields to secular influence, where literary and religious ought to prevail. The vineyard is a better spot to cultivate than the high-way; and, when laborers are wanted, it is pity any one should be led away upon other service, less pleasant and less profitable. "Why even of your ownselves judge ye not what is right?" said our Saviour to those, who could judge of the weather from the face of the sky, without going to ask the *Pharisees;* and who ought, after the same manner, to have judged for themselves in matters of much greater moment, from the signs of the times and the state of the church. I hazarded a great, and, as it may be thought, a rash assertion at p. 43 of the following Life: I said, "that, if we were ever to see such another man as Bishop Horne, he must *come out of the same school.*" I am still of the same mind; for I think no other school will form such a man. I will now hazard a farther opinion to the same effect: for I think it not improbable, that if some man were to arise, with abilities for the purpose, well prepared in his learning, and able to guide his words with discretion; and such a man were to take up the principles called Hutchinsonian, and do them justice; the world would find it much harder to stand against him than they are aware of, even with all the *new biographers* of the age to encourage and assist them. I may be called a *visionary* when I say this; that I cannot help: but how many stranger visions have been realized of late, which, twenty years ago, would have been pronounced utterly incredible! When strange things are to be done, strange men arise to do them. One man, as powerful in truth as *Voltaire* was in error,

* No being whatever can have any power over man, but the God that made him: therefore no man can have any power over any other man, unless he has it from God. Parents have it over their children by creation, therefore from the Creator; and rulers have it, by being God's ministers. This is Mr. Hutchinson's argument; and it is as close as a demonstration.

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might produce very unexpected alterations, and in less time than he did. Then might a new era of learning succeed: as friendly to the Christian cause, as the learning which has been growing up amongst us for the last hundred years, has been hostile and destructive. As to confirmed infidelity, it is a deaf adder, never to be charmed. Yet even here the case is not always to be given up in despair. Many forsake truth because they hate it: of such there is no hope: but some believe wrong only because they never were taught right.

Nayland, July 30th, 1799.

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A

PREFATORY EPISTLE

TO

WILLIAM STEVENS, Esq.

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A PREFATORY EPISTLE

TO

WILLIAM STEVENS, Esq.*

My Dear Friend:

The works of the late Bishop Horne are in many hands, and will be in many more. No reader of any judgment can proceed far into them, without discovering that the author was a person of eminence for his learning, eloquence, and piety; with as much wit, and force of expression, as were consistent with a temper so much corrected and sweetened by devotion.

To all those who are pleased and edified by his writings, some account of his life and conversation will be interesting. They will naturally wish to hear what passed between such a man and the world in which he lived. You and I, who knew him so well and loved him so much, may be suspected of partiality to his memory: but we have unexceptionable testimony to the greatness and importance of his character. While we were under the first impressions of our grief for the loss of him, a person of high distinction, who was intimate with him for many years, declared to you and to me, that he verily believed him to have been *the best man he ever knew*. Soon after the late Earl of Guildford was made Chancellor of the University of Oxford, another great man, who was allowed to be an excellent judge of the weight and wit of conversation, recommended Dr. Horne, who was then vice-chancellor, to him in the following terms: "My lord, I question whether you know your vice-chancellor so well as you ought. When you are next at Oxford, go and dine with him; and, when you have done this once, I need not ask you to do it again; you will find him the pleasantest man you ever met with." And so his lordship seemed to think (who was himself as pleasant a man as most in the kingdom) from the attention he paid to him ever after. I have heard it observed of him by another gentleman, who never was suspected of a want of judgment, that, if some friend had followed him about with a pen and ink, to note down his sayings and observations, they might have furnished out a collection like that which Mr. Boswell has given to the public; but frequently of a superior quality; because the subjects which fell in his way were occasionally of a higher nature, out which more improvement would arise to those that heard him: and it is now much to be lamented, that so many of them have run to waste.†

An allusion to the life of Dr. Johnson, reminds me how much it was wished, and by Dr. Horne in particular, who well knew and highly valued him, that Johnson would have directed the force of his understanding against that modern paper-building of philosophical infidelity, which is founded in pride and ignorance, and supported by sensuality and ridicule. A great personage was of opinion, that Johnson, so employed, would have borne them down with the weight of his language: and he is reported to have expressed the sentiment with singular felicity to a certain person, when the mischievous writings of Voltaire were brought into question: "I wish Johnson would mount his dray-horse,

* Treasurer of Queen Anne's Bounty, a man of singular excellence of character, and of sound learning, particularly in divinity, to the study of which he had very early addicted himself. He wrote some tracts on his favorite subject, one of which, "A Treatise on the Nature and Constitution of the Christian Church," has been re-published by the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge. He was cousin to Dr. Horne, and the closest friendship subsisted between them from their earliest years. He was no less intimate with Mr. Jones, the writer of this prefatory epistle, and wrote the life prefixed to Mr. Jones's works. Mr. Stevens died Feb. 7, 1807.

† A collection of his thoughts on various subjects is preserved in a manuscript, written with his own hand.

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and ride over some of those fellows." Against *those fellows* Dr. Horne employed much of his time, and some of the most useful of his talents: not mounted upon a dray-horse to overbear them, but upon a light courser to hunt them fairly down; with such easy arguments, and pleasant reflections, as render them completely absurd and ridiculous: an account of which will come before us in the proper place. His "Considerations on the Life and Death of St. John the Baptist," and his Sermon preached in St. Sepulchre's church, at London, for the benefit of a charity school for girls, on the "Female Character," seem to me, above all the rest of his compositions, to mark the peculiar temper of his mind, and the direction of his thoughts. When I read his book on "John the Baptist," I am persuaded, there was no other man of his time whose fancy as a writer was bright enough, and whose skill as an interpreter was deep enough, and whose heart as a moralist was pure enough, to have made him the author of that little work. His "Female Character" displays so much judgment in discriminating, such gentle benevolence of heart, and so much of the elegance of a polished understanding, in describing and doing justice to the sex, that every sensible and virtuous woman, who shall read and consider that singular discourse, will bless his memory to the end of the world.

While we speak of those writings which are known to the public, you and I cannot forget his readiness and excellence in writing letters; in which employment he always took delight from his earliest youth; and never failed to entertain or instruct his correspondents. His mind had so much to communicate, and his words were so natural and lively, that I rank some of his letters among the most valuable productions of the kind. I have therefore reason to rejoice that, amidst all my interruptions and removals, I have preserved more than a hundred of them; in reviewing of which I find many observations on the subjects of religion, learning, politics, manners, &c., which are equally instructive and entertaining; and would certainly be so esteemed if they were communicated to the world; at least, to the better part of it: for there were very few occurrences or transactions of any importance, either in the church, or the state, or the literary world, that escaped his observation; and in several of them he took an active part. But in familiar letters, not intended for the public eye, (as none of his ever were,) and suggested by the incidents of the time, some of them trivial and domestic, there will be of course many passages of less dignity than will entitle them to publication; yet, upon the whole, I am satisfied that a very useful selection might be made out of them; and I will not despair of making it myself at some future opportunity.*

From an early acquaintance with Greek and Latin authors, and the gift of a lively imagination, he addicted himself to poetry; and some of his productions have been deservedly admired. But his studies were so soon turned from the treasures of classical wit to the sources of Christian wisdom, that all his poetry is either upon sacred subjects, or upon a common subject applied to some sacred use; so that a pious reader will be sure to gain something by every poetical effort of his mind. And let me not omit another remarkable trait of his character. You can be a witness with me, and so could many others who were used to his company, that few souls were ever more susceptible than his of the charms of music, especially the sacred music of the church: at the hearing of which, his countenance was illuminated, as if he had been favored with impressions beyond those of other men; as if heavenly vision had been superadded to earthly devotion. He therefore accounted it a peculiar happiness of his life, that, from the age of twenty years, he was constantly gratified with the service of a choir; at Magdalen College, at Canterbury, and at Norwich. His lot was cast by Providence amidst the sweets of cloistered retirement, and the daily use of divine harmony; for the enjoyment of both which he was framed by nature, and formed by a religious education. Upon the whole, I never knew a person in whom those beautiful lines of Milton,† of which he was a great admirer, were more exactly verified:

> But let my due feet never fail
> To walk the studious cloister's pale;
> And love the high embower'd roof
> With antique pillars massy proof;
> And storied windows richly dight,
> Casting a dim religious light.
> There let the pealing organ blow,
> To the full voic'd choir below;
> In service high and anthems clear,
> As may, with sweetness through mine ear,
> Dissolve me into ecstacies,
> And bring all heav'n before my eyes.

* In the Gentleman's Magazine for August, 1793, p. 688, I threw out a letter of bishop Horne, as a specimen both of the style and of the usual subjects of his epistolatory writings. It was the first that came to hand on opening a large parcel of them: and I may leave every reader to judge whether that letter be not curious and important. Compared with the present times, it seems prophetical.

† In the "Il Penseroso."

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You who are so perfectly acquainted with the discourse delivered at Canterbury, 1784, when the new organ was opened in the great church, may guess how refined his raptures were; by what he has there said, it may be known what he felt. And I can assure you farther, he was so earnest in this subject, that he took the pains to extract, in his own hand-writing, all the matter that is most observable and useful in the five quarto volumes of Sir John Hawkins upon music. I find among his papers this curious abridgement, which is made with critical taste and discernment.

But his greatest affection being to the science of divinity, he would there of consequence make the greatest improvements; and there the world will find themselves most obliged to him. No considerable progress, no improvement in any science, can be expected, unless it be beloved for its own sake. How this can happen in divinity, all men may not be able to see: but it is possible for the eye of the understanding to be as truly delighted with a sight of the divine wisdom in the great economy of redemption and revelation, as for the eye of the astronomer to take pleasure in observing the lights of heaven, or the naturalist in exploring and collecting, perhaps at the hazard of his life, the treasures of the natural creation. What I here say will be best understood by those who know what affection, what animation, is found in the first writers of the Christian church; with what delight they dwell upon the wonders of the Christian plan, and comment upon the peculiar wisdom of the word of God. To the best writers of the best ages he put himself to school very early, and profited by them so much, that I hope no injustice will be done to their memory, if I think he has in some respects improved upon his teachers.

A man with such talents, and such a temper, must have been generally beloved and admired; which he was almost universally: the exceptions being so few, as would barely suffice to exempt him from that *woe* of the Gospel, which is pronounced against the favorites of the world. But his undisguised attachment to the doctrines of the Church of England, which are still, and, we hope, ever will be, of the *old fashion*, would necessarily expose him to the unmannerly censures of some, and the frigid commendations of others, which are sometimes of worse effect than open scandal. But he never appeared to be hurt by anything of this sort that happened to him. An anonymous pamphlet, which the public gave to the late Dr. Kennicott, attacked him very severely; and soon received an answer from him, which, though very close and strong, was the answer of a wise and temperate man. He also, in his turn, not foreseeing so much benefit to the Scriptures, as some others did, from Dr. Kennicott's plan for collating Hebrew manuscripts, and correcting the Hebrew text, wrote against that undertaking; expressing his objections and suspicions, and giving his name to the world, without any fear or reserve. But so it came to pass, from the moderation and farther experience of both the parties, that, though their acquaintance began in hostility, they at length contracted a friendship for each other which brought on an interchange of every kind office between them, and lasted to the end of their lives, and is now subsisting between their families. To all men of learning, who mean well to the cause of truth and piety while they are warmly opposing one another, may their example be a lasting admonition! But let not this observation be carried farther than it will go:

——————Non ut
Serpentes avibus geminentur, tigribus agni.

In his intercourse with his own family, while the treasures of his mind afforded them some daily opportunities of improvement, the sweetness of his humor was to them a perennial fountain of entertainment. He had the rare and happy talent of disarming all the little vexatious incidents of life of their power to molest, by giving them some unexpected turn. And occurrences of a more serious nature, even some of a frightful aspect, were treated by him with the like ease and pleasantry; of which I could give some remarkable instances.

Surely the life of such a man as this ought not to be forgotten! You and I, who saw and heard so much of it, shall, I trust, never recollect it without being the better for it: and, if we can succeed in showing it so truly to the world, that they also may be the better for it, we shall do them an acceptable service. I have heard it said, and I was a little discouraged by it, that Dr. Horne was a person whose life was not productive of *events* considerable enough to furnish matter for a history. But they who judge thus, have taken but a superficial view of human life, and do not rightly measure the importance of the different events which happen to different sorts of men. Dr. Horne, I must allow, was no circumnavigator; he neither sailed with Drake, Anson, nor Cooke; but he was a man whose mind surveyed the intellectual world, and brought home from thence many excellent observations for the benefit of his native country. He was no military commander; he took no cities; he conquered no countries;

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but he spent his life in subduing his passions, and in teaching us how to do the same. He fought no battles by land or by sea; but he opposed the enemies of God and his truth, and obtained some victories which are worthy to be recorded. He was no prime minister to any earthly potentate; but he was a minister to the King of Heaven and Earth; an office at least as useful to mankind, and in the administration of which no minister to any earthly king ever exceeded him in zeal and fidelity. He made no splendid discoveries in natural history; but he did what was better: he applied universal nature to the improvement of the mind, and the illustration of heavenly doctrines. I call these *events*: not such as make a great noise and signify little, but such as are little celebrated, and of great signification. The same difference is found between Dr. Horne and some other men who have been the subject of history, as between the life of the bee and that of the wasp or hornet. The latter may boast of their encroachments and depredations, and value themselves on being a plague and a terror to mankind. But let it rather be my amusement to follow and observe the motions of the bee. Her journeys are always pleasant; the objects of her attention are beautiful to the eye, and she passes none of them over without examining what is to be extracted from them; her workmanship is admirable; her economy is a lesson of wisdom to the world: she may be accounted "little among them that fly," but the fruit of her labor is the "chief of sweet things."

You know, sir, to what interruptions my life has been subject for thirty years past, and there is some tender ground before us, on which I am to tread as lightly as truth will permit; you will pardon me, therefore, if my progress hath not been so quick as you could have wished; and believe me to be, as I have long been,

Dear Sir,
Your most affectionate and
obliged, humble servant,
WILLIAM JONES.*

* Mr. Jones died in 1800.

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MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

DR. HORNE.

Doctor George Horne, late bishop of Norwich, and for several years president of Magdalen College in Oxford, and dean of Canterbury, was born at Otham, a small village near Maidstone in Kent, on the first of November, in the year 1730. His father was the reverend Samuel Horne,* M. A., rector of Otham, a very learned and respectable clergyman, who for some years had been a tutor at Oxford. This gentleman had so determined with himself, to preserve the integrity of his mind against all temptations from worldly advantage, that he was heard to say, and used often to repeat it, he had rather be a toad-eater to a mountebank, than flatter any great man against his conscience. To this he adhered through the whole course of his life; a considerable part of which was spent in the education of his children, and in a regular performance of all the duties of his parish. He married a daughter of Bowyer Hendley, Esq., by whom he had seven children, four sons and three daughters. The eldest son died very young. The late bishop was the next. His younger brother, Samuel, was a fellow of University College, where he died, greatly respected and lamented. He inherited the integrity of his father, and was an "Israelite indeed," who never did or wished harm to any mortal. Yet his character was by no means of the insipid kind: he had much of the humor and spirit of his elder brother; had a like talent for preaching; and was well attended to as often as he appeared in the university pulpit. His death was announced to an intimate friend by his elder brother in the following short and pathetic letter:

* He died in 1768, aged 75.

My Dear Friend: (No date.)

"Last night, about half an hour past eight, it pleased God to take from us, by a violent fit of the stone in the gall-bladder, my dear brother Sam. He received the blessed sacrament, with my mother and myself, from the hands of Dr. Wetherell;* and, full of faith, with the most perfect resignation, departed in peace with God, the world, and himself. It is a heavy stroke to my poor mother; but she and my sisters bear up with great fortitude. I have lost a very dear friend and pleasant companion! Pray for us—All join in every affectionate wish for the happiness of you and yours, with G. H."

The youngest brother, the Rev. William Horne, was educated at Magdalen College in Oxford, and is the present worthy rector of Otham, in which he succeeded his father, as also in the more valuable rectory of Brede, in the county of Sussex.

Mr. Horne, the father of the family, was of so mild and quiet a temper, that he studiously avoided giving trouble on any occasion. This he carried so far, that, when his son George was an infant, he used to wake him with playing upon a flute, that the change from sleeping to waking might be gradual and pleasant, and not produce an outcry; which frequently happens when children are awakened suddenly. What impression this early custom of his father might make upon his temper, we cannot say: but, certainly, he was remarkable, as he grew up, for a tender feeling of music, especially that of the church.

* The present master of University College, and dean of Hereford, &c.

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Under his father's tuition, he led a pleasant life, and made a rapid progress in Greek and Latin. But some well-meaning friend, fearing he might be spoiled by staying so long at home, advised the sending of him to school. To this his good father, who never was given to make much resistance, readily consented: and he was accordingly placed in the school at Maidstone, under the care of the reverend Deodatus Bye, a man of good principles, and well learned in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew; who, when he had received his new scholar, and examined him at the age of thirteen, was so surprised at his proficiency, that he asked him why he came to school, when he was rather fit to go *from* school? With this gentleman he continued two years; during which, he added much to his stock of learning, and among other things a little elementary knowledge of the Hebrew, on the plan of Buxtorf, which was of great advantage to him afterwards. I am witness to the high respect with which he always spoke of his master, whom he had newly left when my acquaintance with him first commenced at University College, to which he was sent when he was little more than fifteen years of age. When servants speak well of a master or mistress, we are sure they are good servants; and, when a scholar speaks well of his teacher, we may be as certain he is, in every sense of the word, a good scholar.

I cannot help recounting, on this occasion, that there was under the said Deodatus Bye another scholar, very nearly related to Mr. Horne, of whom the master was heard to say, that he never did anything which he wished him not to have done. But, when the lad was told of this, he very honestly observed upon it, that he had done many things which his master *never heard of*. He is now in an office of great responsibility. They who placed him in it, supposed him still to retain the honesty he brought with him from Maidstone school; and I never heard that he had disappointed them.

While Mr. Horne was at school, a Maidstone scholarship in University College became vacant; in his application for which he succeeded, and, young as he was, the master recommended his going directly to college.

Soon after he was settled at University College (where he was admitted on the 15th of March 1745-6,) Mr. Hobson, a good and learned tutor of the house, gave out an exercise, for a trial of skill, to Mr. Horne, and the present writer of his life, who was also in his first year. They were ordered to take a favorite Latin ode of Boetius, and present it to the tutor in a different Latin metre. This they both did as well as they could: and the contest, instead of dividing them, united them ever after, and had also the effect of inspiring them with a love of the lyric poetry of that author: which seems not to be sufficiently known among scholars, though beautiful in its kind. The whole work was once in such esteem, that King Alfred, the founder of University College, and of the English constitution, translated it.

His studies, for a time, were in general the same with those of other ingenious young men; and the vivacity of his mind, which never was exceeded, and made his conversation very desirable, introduced him to many gentlemen of his own standing, who resembled him in their learning and their manners, particularly to Mr. Jenkinson, now earl of Liverpool, Mr. Moore, now* Archbishop of Canterbury, Mr. Cracherode, Mr. Benson, the Honorable Hamilton Boyle, son of Lord Orrery, the late Reverend Jasper Selwin, and many others. Mr. Denny Martin, now Dr. Fairfax, of Leeds Castle, in Kent, was from the same school with Mr. Horne; and has always been very nearly connected with him, as a companion of his studies, a lover of his virtues, and an admirer of his writings.

To show how high Mr. Horne's character stood with all the members of his college, old and young, I need only mention the following fact. It happened about the time when he took his bachelor's degree, which was on the 27th of October, 1749, that a Kentish fellowship became vacant at Magdalen College; and there was, at that time, no scholar of the house who was upon the county. The senior fellow of University College, having heard of this, said nothing of it to Mr. Horne, but went down to Magdalen College, told them what an extraordinary young man they might find in University College, and gave him such a recommendation as disposed the society to accept of him. When the day of election came, they found him such as he had been represented, and much more; and in 1750 he was accordingly chosen a fellow of Magdalen College, and on the first of June, 1752, he took the degree of master of arts.

If we look back upon our past lives, it will generally be found, that the leading events which gave a direction to all that followed, were not according to our own choice or knowledge, but from the hand of an overruling Providence, which acts without consulting us; putting us into situations which are either best for ourselves, or best for the world, or best for both; and leading us, as it led the patriarch Abraham, of whom we are

* Late.

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told that he "knew not whither he was going." This was plainly the case in Mr. Horne's election to Magdalen College. A person took up the matter, unsolicited and in secret: he succeeded. When fellow, his character and conduct gave him favor with society, and, when Dr. Jenner died, they elected him president: the headship of the college introduced him to the office of vice-chancellor, which at length made him as well known to Lord North, as to the Earl of Liverpool: this led to the Deanery of Canterbury, and that to the Bishopric of Norwich.

If we return to the account of his studies; we shall there find something else falling in his way which he never sought after, and attended with a train of very important consequences. While he was deeply engaged in the pursuits of oratory, poetry, philosophy, and history, and making himself well acquainted with the Greek tragedians, of which he was become a great admirer, an accident, of which I shall relate the account as plainly and faithfully as I can, without disguising or diminishing, drew him into a new situation in respect of his mind, and gave a new turn to his studies, before he had arrived at his bachelor's degree. I may indeed say of this, that it certainly gave much of the color which his character assumed from that time, and opened the way to most of his undertakings and publications, as he himself would witness if he were now alive.

It is known to the public that he came very early upon the stage as an author, though an anonymous one, and brought himself into some difficulty under the denomination of an *Hutchinsonian;* for this was the name given to those gentlemen who studied Hebrew and examined the writings of John Hutchinson, Esq., the famous Mosaic philosopher, and became inclined to favor his opinions in theology and philosophy.

About the time of which I am speaking, there were many good and learned men of both universities, but chiefly in and of the University of Oxford, who, from the representation given to the public, some years before, by the right Honorable Duncan Forbes, then Lord President of the Court of Session in Scotland, and from a new and more promising method of studying the Hebrew language, independently of Jewish error, and from a flattering prospect also of many other advantages to the general interests of religion and learning, were become zealous advocates in favor of the new scheme of Mr. Hutchinson. Mr. Horne was led into this inquiry, partly by an accident which had happened to himself.

An attachment to some friends, then well known in the university for their abilities in music, of whom the principal were Mr. Phocion Henley, of Wadham College, Mr. Pixel, of Queen's, and Mr. Short, of Worcester, drew me often to Wadham College; which society has two Hebrew scholarships, on one of which there was a gentleman, a Mr. Catcott, of Bristol, whose father, as I afterwards understood, was one of those authors who first distinguished themselves as writers on the side of Mr. Hutchinson. He possessed a very curious collection of fossils, some of which he had digged and scratched out of the earth with his own hands, at the hazard of his life; a pit near Wadham College, which would have buried him, having fallen in very soon after he was out of it. This collection* I was invited to see, and readily accepted the invitation, out of a general curiosity, without any particular knowledge of the subject. This gentleman, perceiving my attention to be much engaged by the novelty and curiosity of what he exhibited, threw out so many hints about things of which I had never heard, that I requested the favor of some farther conversation with him on a future occasion. One conference followed another, till I saw a new field of learning opened, particularly in the department of natural history, which promised me so much information and entertainment, that I fell very soon into the same way of reading. Dr. Woodward the physician, who had been a fellow-laborer with Hutchinson, and

* It is now deposited in the public library at Bristol, to the corporation of which city he left that and his MSS., on a principle of gratitude for the preferment they had given him; and there I saw it in the year 1790, with many large and valuable additions.

Of the collector it may be truly said, that he was not only an *Hebræan* in his learning, but an *Israelite* in life and manners. To his industry we owe a Treatise on the Deluge, which, when compared with many others, will be found to give the best and most curious information upon the subject. This good and innocent man, whose heart was well affected to all mankind, died before his time; and the manner of his death, if it has been truly reported, will raise the indignation of every sensible and charitable mind. He kept his bed with a bad fever; and, when rest was necessary, he was disturbed by the continual barking of a dog that was chained up near at hand. When his friends sent a civil message desiring that the dog might be removed till the patient was better, it was refused; and, in the event, he was fairly barked to death. If this fact be true, how cheap are the lives and sufferings of some men in the estimation of others!—*Hercule! homini plurima ex homine sunt mala!*—for the dog intended no harm. Of this gentleman himself, we are informed by one of his intimate friends, that, when he settled his account at the year's end, he considered all the money that remained after his own debts were paid, as the property, not of himself, but of the poor, to whose use (being a single man) he never failed to apply it.

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followed very nearly the same principles, had made the natural history of the earth, and the diluvian origination of extraneous fossils so agreeable and so intelligible, that I was captivated by his writings: and from them I went to others; taking what I found, with a taste and appetite, which could not, at that time, make such distinctions as I may have been able to make since. In the simplicity of my heart, I communicated some of the novelties, with which my mind was now filled, to my dear and constant companion, Mr. Horne, from whom I seldom concealed anything: but found him very little inclined to consider them; and I had the mortification to see, that I was rather losing ground in his estimation. Our college lectures on Geometry and Natural Philosophy (which were not very deep) we had gone through with some attention, and thought ourselves qualified to speak up for the philosophy of Newton. It was therefore shocking to hear, that *attraction* was *no physical principle*, and that a *vacuum* had never been, and never would be, *demonstrated*. Here, therefore, Mr. Horne insisted, that if Sir I. Newton's philosophy should be false in these principles, no philosophy would ever be true. How it was objected to, and how it was defended, I do not now exactly remember; I fear, not with any profound skill on either side: but this I well recollect, that our disputes, which happened at a pleasant season of the year, kept us walking to and fro in the quadrangle till past midnight. As I got more information for myself, I gained more upon my companion: but I have no title to the merit of forming him into what he afterwards proved to be.

In the same college with us, there lived a very extraordinary person. He was a classical scholar of the first rate, from a public school remarkable for an unusual degree of taste and judgment in poetry and oratory; his person was elegant and striking, and his countenance expressed at once both the gentleness of his temper and the quickness of his understanding. His manners and address were those of a perfect gentleman: his common talk, though easy and fluent, had the correctness of studied composition: his benevolence was so great, that all the beggars in Oxford knew the way to his chamber-door: upon the whole, his character was so spotless, and his conduct so exemplary, that, mild and gentle as he was in his carriage toward them, no young man dared to be rude in his company. By many of the first people in the university he was known and admired: and it being my fortune to live in the same staircase with him, he was very kind and attentive to me, though I was much his junior. He often allowed me the pleasure of his conversation, and sometimes gave me the benefit of his advice, of which I knew the meaning to be so good, that I always heard it with respect, and followed it as well as I could. This gentleman, with all his other qualifications, was a reader of Hebrew, and a favorer of Mr. Hutchinson's philosophy; but had kept it to himself, in the spirit of Nicodemus; and when I asked him the reason of it afterwards, and complained of the reserve with which he had so long treated me in this respect; "Why," said he, "these things are in no repute; the world does not receive them; and you, being a young man, who must keep what friends you have, and make your fortune in the world, I thought it better to let you go on in your own way, than bring you into that embarrassment which might be productive of more harm than good, and imbitter the future course of your life: besides, it was far from being clear to me, how you would receive them; and then I might have lost your friendship." It was now too late for such a remonstrance to have any effect; I therefore, on the contrary, prevailed upon him to become my master in Hebrew, which I was very desirous to learn: and in this he acquitted himself with so much skill and kind attention, writing out for me with his own hand such grammatical rules and directions as he judged necessary, that in a very short time I could go on without my guide. I remember, however, that I had nearly worked myself to death, by determining, like Duns Scotus in the picture-gallery, to go through a whole chapter in the Hebrew before night.

To this gentleman, whose name was George Watson, I recommended Mr. Horne at my departure from Oxford; and they were so well pleased with each other, that Mr. Horne, instead of going home to his friends in the vacation, stayed for the advantage of following his studies at Oxford, under the direction of his new teacher: and, in the autumn of the year 1749, he began a series of letters to his father, which fill above thirty pages in large quarto, very closely written; from the whole tenor of which, it is pleasant to see, how entire a friendship and confidence there was between a grave and learned father, and a son not yet twenty years of age. Of these letters, though they are by no means correct enough, either for style or judgment, to stand the test of severe criticism, it is highly proper I should give some account; to show what those opinions were which had now got possession of his mind; intermixing with my abstract such notes and explanations as shall seem requisite for a better understanding of it.

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Having first apologized to his father for not visiting him in the vacation, he gives him an account of his teacher. "I am obliged for the happiness I have enjoyed of late to a gentleman of this society, and shall always bless God that his providence ever brought me acquainted with him. He is a fellow of our house; and, though but six-and-twenty, as complete a scholar in the whole circle of learning, as great a divine, as good a man, and as polite a gentleman, as the present age can boast of." These words of Mr. Horne I introduce with peculiar satisfaction; because they afford so strong a concurring testimony to the truth of what I have already ventured to say of Mr. Watson. This excellent man never published any large work, and will be known to posterity only by some occasional pieces which he printed in his life-time. His sermon on the 19th Psalm, which he preached before the University, and afterwards left the printing of to my care, so delighted Mr. Horne (as it appears from these letters to his father,) that it probably raised in his mind the first desire of undertaking that Commentary on the whole book of Psalms, which he afterwards brought to such perfection.* Mr. Watson published another sermon on the Divine Appearance in Gen. 18; which was furiously shot at by the bush-fighters of that time in the *Monthly Review;* insomuch that the author thought it might be of some service to take up his pen and write them a letter; in which their insolence is reproved with such superior dignity of mind and serenity of temper, and their ignorance and error so learnedly exposed, that, if I were desirous of showing to any reader what Mr. Watson was, and what *they* were, I would by all means put that letter into his hand; of which I suppose no copies are now to be found, but in the possession of some of his surviving friends. It is, however, made mention of with due honor by Dr. Delany, the celebrated Dean of Down, in Ireland, who was once the intimate friend of Swift, and has given us the best account of his life and character in his Observations in answer to Lord Orrery. In a preface to the third volume of his Revelation examined with Candor, which he printed at London very late in life, he speaks of a malignant style of criticism, in practice at that time with the obscure and unknown authors of a Monthly Review; and observes upon the case, that "he must seem at first sight a rash as well as a bold man, who would venture to wage war at once with Billingsgate and banditti. And yet in truth," says he, "such a war (defensive only) hath been waged with them to great advantage, by a gentleman, whose mind and manners are as remote from illiberal scurrility and abuse, as his adversaries appear to be from learning, from candor, and from every character of true criticism. Mr. Watson, the defendant here mentioned, hath, in return to their scurrility, answered and exposed them with strong, clear, and irresistible reasoning, and such a meek, calm, and Christian spirit, as hath done honor to his own character, and uncommon justice to the Christian cause; such as were sufficient to silence anything but effrontery, hardened in ignorance, to the end of the world." Mr. Watson also printed a sermon, preached before the university, on the 29th of May, which he calls an Admonition to the Church of England. In a long preface to this sermon, he has thrown out such valuable observations, that an excellent manual might be formed out of them, for preserving the members of the church of England steady in their profession; by showing to them, so plainly as is here done, the principal dangers to which they are now exposed. Having said thus much of his teacher (and I could with pleasure have said much more,) I must now show what he learned under him.

From the general account he gives of his studies, he appears, in consequence of his intercourse with Mr. Watson, to have been persuaded, that the System of Divinity in the Holy Scripture is explained and attested by the scriptural account of created nature; and that this account, including the Mosaic Cosmogony, is true so far as it goes: and that the Bible, in virtue of its originality, is fitter to explain all the books in the world, than they are to explain it: that much of the learning of the age was either unprofitable in itself, or dangerous in its effect; and that literature, so far as it was a fashion, was in general unfavorable to Christianity, and to a right understanding of the Scripture: that the Jews had done much hurt in the Hebrew; not to the text by corrupting it, but by leading us into their false way of interpreting and understanding it; and that their rabbinical writers were therefore not to be taken as teachers by Christian students: that a notion lately conceived of the Mosaic law, as an institution merely civil or secular, without the doctrines of life and immortality in it, was of pernicious tendency; contrary to the sense of all the primitive writers, and the avowed doctrine of the church of England: that the sciences of metaphysics and ethics had a near alliance to deism; and that, in consequence of the authority they had obtained, the doctrine of our pulpits was in general fallen be-

* This is the gentleman who is spoken of in a note to the Comment on Psal. xix.

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low the Christian standard; and that the Saviour and the redemption, without which our religion is nothing, were in a manner forgotten; which had given too much occasion to the irregular teaching of the tabernacle: that the sin of modern deism is the same in kind with the sin of paradise, which brought death into the world; because it aspires to divine wisdom, that is, to the knowledge of divine things, and the distinction between good and evil, independently of God.

He had learned farther, that the Hebrew language, and the Hebrew antiquities, lead to a superior way of understanding the mythology and writing of the Heathen classical authors; and that the Hebrew is a language of ideas, whose terms for invisible and spiritual things are taken with great advantage from the objects of nature, and that there can be no other way of conceiving such things, because all our ideas enter by the senses, whereas in all other languages there are arbitrary sounds without ideas.

It appeared to him farther, that unbelief and blasphemy were gaining ground upon us, in virtue of some popular mistakes in natural philosophy, and threatened to banish all religion out of the world. Voltaire began very early to make his use of philosophy, and corrupt the world with it. He never was fit to mount it; but he walked by the side of it, and used it as a stalking-horse. It is therefore of great consequence to the learned to know, that, as the heavens and the elements of the world had been set up by the Heathens, as having power themselves; and that as the Heathens, building on this false foundation, had lost the knowledge of God; the modern doctrine, which gives innate powers to matter, as the followers of Democritus and Epicurus did, would probably end in atheism:* that the forces, which the modern philosophy uses, are not the forces, of nature; but that the world is carried on by the action of the elements on one another, and all under God: that it is no better than raving, to give active powers to matter, supposing it capable of acting where it is not; and to affirm at the same time, that all matter is inert, that is inactive, and that even the Deity cannot act but where he is present, because his *power* cannot be but where his *substance* is.

He was also convinced, that infinite mischief had been done, not only by the tribe of deists and philosophers, but by some of our most celebrated divines, in extolling the dignity of human nature and the wisdom of human reason; both of which the Scripture delivers to us under a very different character, which the experience of the world is daily confirming. That infidels and profligates should wish to establish their own opinions upon the ruins of revelation was not to be wondered at; but that they whose office it was to dress and defend the sacred vineyard, should fall in with them, and join with the wild boar out of the wood to root it up, was a matter of grief and surprise. A distemper must indeed be epidemical, when the physicians themselves are seized with it. This malady, when traced to its fountain head, appears to have arisen from a general neglect in schools and seminaries of the study of the Scriptures in their original languages; where they attend so much to the works of heathens, and so little to the book of light, life, and immortality. While the heads of boys are filled with tales of Jupiter, Juno, Mars, Bacchus, and Venus, the Bible is little heard of; and so the Heathen creed becomes not only the first, but the whole study. Jews, mistaken as they are, are still diligent in teaching the Scripture to their children in their own way; while we are teaching what even Jews are wise enough to abominate. Possessed by this opinion, that all polite knowledge is in heathen authors, and the Bible but a dull heavy book, which, instead of promoting, rather stands in the way of improvement, a lad is sent from school to the university. Here is a very alarming crisis. If he happens to be of a sprightly wit, he falls into loose company, and, for want of religious principles, is led into all manner of wickedness. Should he study, he obtains logic under the form of a scholastic jargon, which in its simplicity* is of excellent use. Then he learns a system of ethics, which teaches morals without religious data, as the Heathens did. After which, he probably goes on to Wollaston, Shaftsbury, and others, and is at length fixed in the opinion, that reason is sufficient for man with revelation. Our young philosopher, having succeeded thus far, wants nothing but metaphysics to complete him; by setting him to reason without principles, to judge without evidence, and to comprehend without ideas. He learns to deduce the being and attributes of God *a priori;* in consequence of which he discovers that God is not a Trinity, but a single person. When a gentleman, thus equipped, takes the Bible into his hand and commences divinity, what must become of *it*,

* This hath now actually come to pass.

* The more *simple* the better: but the *old logic*, even with all its jargon, is a better guard to truth, than the new which has superseded it; and is found by many, who have considered the difference, so to be.

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and of *him!* Thus it appears, that, as things go now, a man may be a master of what is called human learning, and yet ignorant to the last degree of what only is worth knowing.

The foregoing abstract, which I have taken as faithfully as I could, is sufficient to show upon what great and important subjects Mr. Horne's mind was employed at this early period of his life. In the course of this correspondence, there are several strokes of humor which ought not to be forgotten. The Hebrew Concordance of Marius de Calasio had lately been republished by the Rev. Mr. Romaine, and was an expensive work, so high as ten guineas at that time, though now at a price very much reduced. Mr. Horne had set his heart upon this work, thinking it necessary to his present studies; but knew not how to purchase it out of his allowance, or to ask his father in plain terms to make him a present of it; so he told him a story, and left the moral of it to speak for itself.

In the last age, when Bishop Walton's Polyglott was first published, there was at Cambridge a Mr. Edwards, passionately fond of Oriental learning; who afterwards went by the name of Rabbi Edwards. He was a good man, and a good scholar; but being then rather young in the university, and not very rich, Walton's great work was far above his pocket. Nevertheless, not being able to sleep well without it, he sold his bed and some of his furniture, and made the purchase; in consequence of which he was obliged to sleep in a large chest, originally made to hold his clothes. But getting into his chest one night rather uncautiously, the lid of it, which had a bolt with a spring, fell down upon him, and locked him in past recovery; and there he lay well-nigh smothered to death. In the morning, Edwards, who was always an exact man, not appearing, it was wondered what was become of him: till at last his bed-maker, or the person who in better times *had been his bed-maker*, being alarmed, went to his chambers time enough to release him; and the accident, getting air, came to the ears of his friends, who soon redeemed his bed for him. This story Mr. Horne told his father; and it had the desired effect. His father immediately sent him the money; for which he returns him abundant thanks, promising to repay him in the only possible way, viz. that of using the books to the best advantage. They were, without question, diligently turned over while he worked at his Commentary on the Psalms, and yielded him no small assistance.

The use of Hebrew to divines was well understood by Bishop Bull, who did not content himself with a slight and superficial knowledge of it; and judged it so necessary in divinity, that it was usual with him to recommend the study of it to the candidates for orders, as a foundation for their future theological performances. Without this knowledge in Mr. Horne, we should never have seen his Commentary upon the Psalms.

When a student hath once persuaded himself that he sees truth in the principles of Mr. Hutchinson, a great revolution succeeds in his ideas of the natural world and its economy. Qualities in matter, with a vacuum for them to act in, are no longer venerable; and the authority of Newton's name, which goes with them, loses some of its influence. Nor is this in the present case so much to be wondered at: for Mr. Hutchinson had conceived an opinion, which possessed his mind very strongly, that Sir Isaac Newton and Dr. Clarke had formed a design, by introduciug certain speculations founded on their new mode of philosophizing, to undermine and overthrow the theology of the Scripture, and to bring in the Heathen Jupiter or Stoical *anima mundi* into the place of the true God, whom we Christians believe and worship. This will seem less extravagant, when it is known, that Mr. Boyle* had also expressed his suspicions, many years before, that Heathenism was about to rise again out of some new speculations, and reputedly grand discoveries in natural philosophy. Yet I am not willing to believe, that the eminent persons above mentioned had actually formed any such design. What advantage unbelievers have, since their time, taken of their speculations in divinity and philosophy, and of the high repute which has attended them, and of the exclusive honors given to mathematical learning and mathematical reasoning, is another question; and it calls for a serious examination at this time, when the moral world is in great disorder, from causes not well understood.

However these things may be, the prejudice so strongly infused by Mr. Hutchinson against an evil design in Clarke and Newton, took possession of Mr. Horne's mind at the age of nineteen; and was further confirmed by reports which he had heard of a private good understanding betwixt them and the sceptics of the day, such as Collins, Toland, Tindal, &c. more than the world generally knew of. It is an undoubted fact, that there was an attempt to introduce atheism, or materialism, which is the same thing, here in

*This remarkable passage from Mr. Boyle is quoted in The Scholar Armed, lately published for the Rivingtons, vol. ii. p. 282.

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England, toward the beginning this century; of which the *Pantheisticon* of *Janis Junius Eoganesius*, a technical name for John Toland, is a sufficient proof: and Hutchinson, who knew all the parties concerned, and the designs going forward, dropped such hints in his Treatise on Power Essential and Mechanical,* as gave a serious alarm to many persons well disposed. But our young scholar, viewing the whole matter at first on the ridiculous side, and considering it not only as a dangerous attempt upon religion, but a palpable offence against truth and reason, drew a parallel between the Heathen doctrines in the *Somnium Scipionis* of Cicero, and the Newtonian philosophy; which he published, but without his name, in the year 1751; all the particulars of which parallel I shall not undertake to justify. I see its faulty flights and wanderings, from a want of more mature judgment and experience. It provoked several remarks, some in print, and some in manuscript; of which remarks the judgment was not greater, and the levity not less. The question was in reality too deep for those who attempted to fathom it at that time. Mr. Horne soon saw the impropriety of the style and manner, which as a young man he had assumed for merriment in that little piece: these were by no means agreeable to the constitution of his mind and temper. He therefore observed a very different manner afterwards; and, as soon as he had taken time to bethink himself, he resumed and reconsidered the subject; publishing his sentiments in 1753 (the year after that in which he had taken his degree of M. A.) in a mild and serious pamphlet, which he called A fair, candid, and impartial State of the Case between Sir Isaac Newton and Mr. Hutchinson: allowing to Sir Isaac the great merit of having settled laws and rules in natural philosophy; but at the same time claiming for Mr. Hutchinson the discovery of the true physiological causes, by which, under the power of the Creator, the natural world is moved and directed. The piece certainly is, what it calls itself, *fair*, *candid*, and *impartial*; and the merits of the cause are very judiciously stated between the two parties; in consequence of which, a reader will distinguish that Newton may be of sovereign skill in measuring *forces* as a mathematician, and yet that Hutchinson may be right in assigning *causes* as a physiologist. It would carry me out too far, if I were to show by what arguments and evidence Mr. Horne has supported this distinction. For these I must refer to the pamphlet itself, which, having become very scarce hath been lately reprinted with some other of his works:* and I will venture to say thus much in its behalf, that, whatever becomes of the argument, the manner in which it is handled shows Mr. Horne, who, when he wrote it, was only in his twenty-third year, to have been a very extraordinary young man.

New studies and new principles never fail to bring a man into new company; all mankind being naturally disposed to associate with those who agree best with themselves. Of these his new friends it will be just and proper to give some short account. The chief of them was Mr. Watson, whom I have already mentioned. Another of them was Dr. Hodges, the Provost of Oriel College; who composed a work, to which he gave the title of Elihu; the chief subject of it being the character of Elihu in the book of Job. The style of it has great dignity and stateliness, without being formal; and is, at the same time, clear and easy to be understood. Dr. Hodges was undoubtedly a very great master of his pen; but, having declared himself without reserve in favor of Mr. Hutchinson's doctrines, his work was virulently assaulted, and grossly misrepresented. Of this he complained; as he might well do: and what did he get by it? He was told, in return, that a writer upon the book of *Job* should take every thing with *patience!* His book, however, went into a second edition. He was a man of a venerable appearance, with an address and delivery which made him very popular as a preacher in the university.

The learned Provost of Oriel, so far as it occurs to me, was the first who with a strong hand sounded the alarm-bell against those speculations and their consequences, which have now prevailed to the overthrow of the church and kingdom of France. A piece entitled *Les Mœurs* (*Manners*) was published there in the year 1748; the tendency of which was to establish natural religion on the ruins of all external worship, and so to free the world from all laws, human and divine; that man might be guided by nothing but the light of his own mind. This was burned by the hangman at Paris; the soil, as Dr. Hodges observed, being not *quite*, though *nearly*, prepared for the reception of these tares. The country and the climate chosen by the writer, were certainly promising, on this consideration, that superstition and irreligion are generally observed to be the

* See p. 243, &c. of the old edition; beginning with the account of Woodward's conduct.

* This pamphlet, together with another entitled An Apology for certain Gentlemen in the University of Oxford, is now added to the present collection of his works.

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reciprocal causes and effects of each other. Against the principles and spirit of this undertaking, the author of *Elihu* was so much in earnest, that he gave an abridgment of the work from a French copy which he procured for that purpose. I could here stop with great pleasure, if it were proper, to extract some of the evidence so powerfully urged against all such attempts by this learned gentleman: but I must refer the reader to his *Preliminary Discourse*. It is, however, a fact never to be neglected, which he and others have ascertained by abundant authority, that "all the religion of the Heathen world was traditional revelation corrupted:" which, if it can be made good, overthrows at once all the modern theories of infidelity.

The Rev. Mr. Holloway, rector of Middleton-Stoney, in Oxfordshire, had been a private tutor to Lord Spencer, in the house of the Honorable John Spencer, his father; who, with all his extravagances, never failed to preserve due respect to Mr. Holloway,* and listened to him with attention, when he conversed freely with the company at his table. This gentleman had been personally acquainted with Mr. Hutchinson, and had published an elementary piece in favor of his philosophical principles. But he was better known in the University of Oxford by three excellent discourses on the Doctrine of Repentance, with a Supplement in answer to the perverse glosses of Tindal, the free-thinker. The vice-chancellor of that time took a pique against him for dropping a hint, in his Supplement against Tindal, that the person of Melchizedec was an exhibition of Christ before his incarnation. This was no novel opinion: it had been advanced by others, before and after the reformation; and in *them* the doctrine had given no offence. But Mr. Holloway, being a man suspected and proscribed on some other accounts, met with some hard and unworthy treatment upon the occasion: yet to avoid a misunderstanding with the whole university, when only some individuals were concerned, he suppressed what he had written in his own defence. His scheme for an Analysis of the Hebrew language, though it comprehends a vast compass of learning, is partly fanciful, and would bear a long dispute, into which I shall not enter: but this must be said in respect to Mr. Horne, that when he first commenced his theological studies, he derived many real advantages from his acquaintance with this gentleman; and I could name one of his most shining and useful discourses, which, in the main argument of it, was taken from some loose papers of remarks on Warburton's Divine Legation; to the principles of which this learned gentleman, for many good reasons which he spared not to give, was a zealous adversary. To say the truth, there was little cordiality on either side between the renowned writer of the Divine Legation and the readers of Mr. Hutchinson. On most subjects of religion and learning, their opinions were irreconcilable. He despised their doctrines and interpretations, and railed at them as *Cabbalistical;* and they despised his empirical divinity; while, at the same time, they dreaded the ill effect of it, from the boldness of the man, and the popularity of his books, which have a great flash of learning, but with little solidity and less piety. To the purity of Christian literature they have certainly done, and are still doing, much hurt. When the first volume of the Divine Legation was shown to Dr. Bentley (as his son-in-law, the late Bishop Cumberland told me) he looked it over, and then observed of the author to his friend—*This man has a monstrous appetite, with a very bad digestion.** In justice to Mr. Holloway, whatever might be said against him, it must be said for him, that he was a sound classical scholar, who had gone farther than most men into the mysteries of the Greek philosophy; and to an attentive study of the Christian fathers had added great skill in the Hebrew and Arabic languages; such as qualified him

* A military gentleman, who was sometimes of the party, remarked to a friend, that the strictest decorum was always observed, whenever Mr. Holloway, who supported the dignity of his profession, was present; while another clergyman, who thought to recommend himself by laying aside the clerical character, was treated with little ceremony, and held in sovereign contempt; from which he naturally inferred, that the clergy would not fail to meet with proper respect, if it was not their own fault.

* This was written before I had a sight of the learned Bishop Hurd's Life of Dr. Warburton, lately published, in which such sublime praises are bestowed on the Alliance, the Divine Legation, and other works of that fanciful but very ingenious projector of unfounded theories. Though I honor the character of Bishop Hurd, and admire every thing he writes, my opinion of the *usefulness* of the works of Dr. Warburton is very little changed by what I have seen. I am still persuaded, that neither religion nor learning will ever derive much benefit, nor the Christian world any considerable *edification* from the works of that famous writer: neither will they probably derive any great harm; because, it is apprehended, the reading of Bishop Warburton's books will hereafter be much less than it hath been. The Methodists despised him for a part of his Christian character, as much as he depised them for a part of their character; and both had equal reason. His learning is almost as much unlike to Christianity, as their Christianity is unlike to learning. I forbear to indulge any farther reflections on so critical a subject.

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to take up and maintain the cause of the *Hebrew Primævity* against its opponents. Confined as he was to the solitude of a country parish, if he found himself out of practice in the writing of Latin, he used to renew it occasionally by reading over the *Moriæ Encomium* of Erasmus, which never failed to reinstate him: and I am persuaded the anecdote may be of use to other scholars when in danger of losing their Latinity.

Mr. Holloway was first induced to take notice of Mr. Horne, on occasion of some verses which he had addressed to his friend Mr. Watson. They expressed the ardor of his gratitude, and discovered a poetical genius.*

The Rev. Mr. Welbourne of Wendelbury, near Bicester in Oxfordshire, whom, from the monastic spirit of a single life, and a remarkable attachment to the study of antiquity, Mr. Horne delighted to call by the name of *Robertus Wendelburiensis*, was very much respected and beloved, and often visited by Mr. Horne so long as he lived. Educated at Westminster and Christ-Church, he was a scholar of the politer class; and a deep and skilful student in the Scripture, of which he gave a specimen in an interpretation of the last words of David from the Hebrew. He went farther in this, and with better success, than the learned and ingenious Dr. Grey, the versifier of the book of Job, after the manner of Bishop Hare's Psalms, with whom he had been acquainted. He wrote well in English and Latin, and composed several learned works, which had their exceptionable passages, from a visible inclination toward some of the peculiarities of the church of Rome. He had lived several years in strict friendship with Dr. Frewen the physician, in whose house he always resided when he made a visit to Oxford; also with the Rev. Sir John Dolben, of Finedon, in Northamptonshire, the learned, accomplished, devout, and charitable father of the present worthy Sir William Dolben, member for the University of Oxford; and also Mr. Counsellor Gilpin; to the last of whom he left his collection of Grecian and Roman coins; which, if I am rightly informed, is now in the new library, at Christ-Church.†

Another excellent friend of Mr. Horne was the late Dr. Patten, of Corpus Christi College; a gentleman of the purest manners and unquestionable erudition. On reconsidering the state of the question between Christians and infidels, and seeing how absolutely necessary it was to speak a plain language in a case of such importance to the world, he gave to the University of Oxford a discourse which he called the "Christian Apology;" and which the vice-chancellor and heads of houses requested him to publish. It went upon true and indisputable principles; but it was not relished by the rash reasoners of the Warburtonian school; and a Mr. Heathcote, a very intemperate and unmannerly writer, who was at that time an assistant-preacher to Dr. Warburton at Lincoln's Inn, published a pamphlet against it; laying himself open, both in the matter and the manner of it, to the criticisms of Dr. Patten; who will appear to any candid reader, who shall review that controversy, to have been greatly his superior as a scholar and a divine. Dr. Patten could not with any propriety be said to have written on the Hutchinsonian plan; but Mr. Heathcote, in aid of his own arguments, found it convenient to charge him with it, and suggest to the public that he was an Hutchinsonian; which gave Dr. Patten an opportunity of speaking his private sentiments, and doing justice to those gentlemen in the University of Oxford, who were then under the reproach of being followers of Mr. Hutchinson.*

The Rev. Dr. Wetherell, now dean of Hereford, was then a young man in the college of which he is now the worthy master: and such was his zeal at that time in favor of Hebrew literature, that Mr. Horne, Mr. Wetherell, and Mr. Martin (now Dr. Fairfax,) and a fourth person intimately connected with them all, sat down for one whole winter, to examine and settle, as far as they were able, all the *Themata* of the Hebrew language; writing down their remarks daily, and collecting from Marius, and Buxtorf, and Pagninus, and others, what might be of use for compiling a new lexicon. How much judgment they had, at this early period, to render their papers valuable, we dare not say; but, such as they were, the fruits of a faithful and laborious scrutiny, a copy of them was handed to the learned Mr. Parkhurst, late of the University of Cambridge,

* It was rather officious to give them to the world, as somebody hath done since Dr. Horne's death. Our opinion of a great and good man, who has finished his course, ought not to be gathered from the hasty and ardent productions of his youth.

† The complexion of this good man's character may be distinguished in the last letter I received from him, about two months before his death, of which I had an account from Dr. Horne. I shall give both the letters in the Appendix.

* On occasion of this paragraph, I have reconsidered Dr. Patten's Discourse and the Defence of it; and am persuaded it might be of much service, if every young man were to read them both, before he takes holy orders. His picture of fashionable Christianity is very alarming, and I fear it is not exaggerated. Another Discourse preached before the university, and from the same pen, published also by request, entitled "The opposition between the Gospel of Jesus Christ and what is called the religion of Nature," deserves to be noticed here.

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an eminent laborer in the same vineyard, to whom the public have since been greatly indebted for three editions of his Hebrew lexicon; which contains such variety of curious and useful information, that contrary to the nature of other dictionaries (properly so called) it may be turned over for entertainment as a commentary on the Scripture, and a magazine of biblical erudition. His two Scriptural lexicons, the one Greek, and the other Hebrew, are both so excellent in their way, that they will last as long as the world; unless the new Goths of infidelity should break in upon us, and destroy, as they certainly wish to do, all the monuments of Christian learning.*

Doctor George Berkeley, of late years a prebendary of the church of Canterbury, and Chancellor of Brecknock, was then Mr. George Berkeley, a student of Christ-Church, a son of that celebrated pattern of virtue, science, and apostolical zeal, Dr. Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne in the kingdom of Ireland; who chose to spend the latter days of his life in retirement at Oxford, while his son was a member of the university. Between this gentleman and Mr. Horne a very early intimacy commenced, and much of their time was spent in each other's company. Under the training, and with the example of so excellent a father, Mr. Berkeley grew up into a firm believer of the Christian religion, and discovered an affectionate regard to every man of letters, who was ready, like himself, to explain and defend it. He was consequently a very zealous admirer of Mr. Horne; and the one had the happiness of belonging to the Chapter, while the other for several years was Dean of Canterbury; and when his friend was removed to the see of Norwich, Dr. Berkeley preached his consecration sermon at Lambeth; an act of respect for which he had reserved himself, having been under a persuasion, for some years before, that he should see Mr. Horne become a Bishop. His discourse† on that occasion showed him to be a true son and an able minister of the church of England; and another discourse, originally delivered on a 30th of January, and reprinted since with large and curious annotations, has distinguished him for as firm and loyal a subject to his king and the laws of his country. Dr. Berkeley was very greatly esteemed by his patron the late Archbishop Secker, with whom he had much influence; and he never ceased to take advantage of it, till he had obtained preferment from him for one of his old friends, who had no other prospect. The father of Dr. Berkeley has been made known to the world by a few happy words of Mr. Pope: but the following anecdote, which is preserved among the private notes of Bishop Horne, will give us a more exact idea of his character. Bishop Atterbury, having heard much of Mr. Berkeley, wished to see him. Accordingly, he was one day introduced to him by the Earl of Berkeley. After some time, Mr. Berkeley left the room; on which Lord Berkeley said to the bishop, "Does my cousin answer your lordship's expectations?" The bishop, lifting up his hands in astonishment, replied, "So much understanding, so much knowledge, so much innocence, and such humility, I did not think had been the portion of any but angels, till I saw this gentleman." The passage is taken from Hughes's Letters II. 2.*

Mr. Samuel Glasse, a student of Christ-Church, who had the repute he merited of being one of the best scholars from Westminster school, was another of Mr. Horne's intimate friends, and continued to love and admire him through the whole course of his life. The world need not be told what Dr Glasse has been doing since he left the university, as a divine, as a magistrate, and as a teacher and tutor of the first eminence; of whose useful labors, the Gospel, the law, the church, the bar, the schools of learning, the rich and the poor, have long felt and confessed the benefit; and may they long continue so to do! although it may be said, without any suspicion of flattery, in the words of the poet—*non deficit alter aureus* —a son, whose learning, abilities, and good principles, have already entitled him to the thanks of his country, and will secure his fame with posterity.

This gentleman, the son of Dr. G., distinguished himself very early in life by his uncommon proficiency in Hebrew literature, which procured him the favor of Dr. Kennicott, and a studentship of Christ-Church. He has since acquired a great addition of fame as a classical scholar, by his elegant translation into Greek Iambics of Mason's Caractacus, and Milton's Samson Agonistes, adapted in form, and style, and manner, to the

*The third edition of Mr. Parkhurst's Hebrew lexicon was promoted by Bishop Horne, whose name stands first among the patrons to whom it is inscribed; though Bishop Horne did not live till it was published.

†This sermon is now published. The title of it is, An Inquiry into the origin of Episcopacy, in a Discourse preached at the Consecration of George Horne, D.D &c. &c.

*Dr. Berkeley, the excellent son of an excellent father, changed this world (in which he had seen much trouble) for a better, on the day of Epiphany 1795, before the first edition of this work went to the press.

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ancient Greek drama.* And he has recently shown himself an elegant English writer, as well as a pious and well-informed divine, by his publication of the Contemplations of Bishop Hall, in a form very much improved. He had prepared a dedication of that excellent work to Bishop Horne; but the bishop dying, while the work was depending, an advertisement is prefixed, which does great honor to his memory.

From Westminster school there came, at an earlier period, a Mr. John Hamilton, of University College, whose father was a member of the Irish Parliament, and his mother a lady of high rank. This amiable young man, for the politeness of his behavior, his high accomplishments, his vivacity of temper and readiness of wit, was a companion equally respectable and desirable; so nearly allied in disposition and abilities to the two characters of Mr. Watson and Mr. Horne, that a strict friendship grew up between them. The example of some seducing companions from Westminster school had rendered him for a while dissipated and thoughtless: but when the time approached in which he was required to prepare himself for holy orders, he determined to become a clergyman in good earnest; gave himself up to study and retirement; and was known to rise frequently at four o'clock in a summer's morning, to read the works of St. Austin. With this disposition, it is no wonder he was ready to embrace every opportunity of deriving more light to his Christian studies. He therefore soon became a Hebrew student in common with his friends, and made a rapid progress in divinity. For a time he took upon himself the curacy of Bedington, in Surrey: but he was soon advanced to the archdeaconry of Raphoe, in Ireland, having first obtained a presentation to the valuable living of Taboyne; where, to the loss of the world, and the unspeakable grief of the author of these papers, to whom he was a most affectionate and valuable friend, he soon afterwards died.

* Though I speak with respect of this, as a work of great scholarship, and even wonderful in a young man, I have my doubts whether any Englishman can exhibit unexceptionable Greek versification, in which a critic cannot, with a microscope in his hand, and a little jealousy in his eye, discover flaws and pinholes; and that a Greek version of a fine English poem, whoever produces it, will at last be but a bad likeness of a good thing: which may be said without impeaching the parts or the diligence of any translator. When a man writes in a dead language, he does it at a great hazard: and I have heard this matter carried to such a nicety by a person of distinguished learning, as to suppose it dangerous, even in Latin composition, to put a noun and a verb together, unless you can find that noun and that verb actually standing together in some native Latin writer of allowed authority.

In the beginning of his indisposition, he had been almost miraculously restored at Bristol, in the spring of the year 1754, just at the time when the living was given to him by Lord Abercorn, his relation, and the dignity superadded by the bishop of the diocese. Ireland was a stage on which his learning and principles, his active zeal, his polite manners and great abilities, were much wanted. They have at this time but a mean opinion of that kind of learning which this young archdeacon so much valued and affected. Had he lived, he might have done much good in bringing over many considerable persons to an attentive study of the Scripture, which had produced so happy an effect upon himself. But, alas! instead of this, it is now reported, that the country has been considerably hurt in its principles by some modern writings, which have lately come into vogue; of which it is not my business in this place to speak more particularly.

It has given me great pleasure thus to take a review, hasty as it has been, of some of those excellent persons with whom Mr. Horne was connected in the days of his youth. A reader, who is a stranger to all the parties, may suspect that I have turned my pen to the making of extraordinary characters; but I trust he will take my word for it, that I have only made them such as I found them; and such as the late good bishop their friend would have represented them, had he been alive and called upon to do them justice. I am convinced his own pen would have given more to some, not less to any: and that he would have mentioned others of whom I have not spoken; for certainly I might have added many to the collection; such as the Rev. John Auchmuty, whose father was Dean of Armagh, and who used to amuse us with an account of his adventures at Tetuan in Africa, during his chaplainship under Admiral Forbes; Mr. James Stillingfleet, a grandson to the celebrated and learned bishop of that name, first one of the Hebrew exhibitioners at Wadham College, afterwards fellow of Merton, and now prebendary of Worcester; Mr. George Downing, another Hebrew exhibitioner at Wadham College, and now a prebendary of Ely, whom Mr. Horne admired and respected for those virtues and qualifications which have endeared him to all his acquaintaince. To these I might add Mr. Edward Stillingfleet, a gentleman commoner of Wadham; the Rev. John Whitaker, now so well known by his learned and valuable writings; with others of like character and literature, to none of whom do I mean any disrespect if I have omitted them. There

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was one very learned gentleman in particular, Mr. Forster of Corpus Christi College, who published a beautiful quarto editon of the Hebrew Bible. He had the reputation of being a profound scholar, and was a great favorite with Bishop Butler, author of the celebrated *Analogy*, &c. This learned man introduced himself to Mr. Horne's acquaintance, only for the opportunity of conferring with him on some principles which he had newly adopted in philosophy and divinity. How far Mr. Horne and Mr. Forster proceeded in the argument I cannot exactly say; but this I well remember, that when the *consubstantiality* of the *elements* came into question, Mr. Forster did not seem to think *that* doctrine improbable, which later inquiries have rendered much less so; and allowed, that if the public were once satisfied in that particular, he believed very few objections would be made to the philosophical scheme of Mr. Hutchinson.*

I am now to conclude with a character, which I introduce with some reluctance; but it is too remarkable to be omitted in an account of Mr. Horne's literary connections; and some useful moral attends it in every circumstance: the character I mean is that of the late Dr. Dodd. Humanity should speak as tenderly of him as truth will permit, in consideration of his severe and lamentable fate.

A similitude in their studies and their principles produced an acquaintance between Mr. Horne and Mr. Dodd: for when Mr. Dodd began the world, he was a zealous favorer of Hebrew learning, and distinguished himself as a peacher; in which capacity he undoubtedly excelled to a certain degree, and in his time did much good. After Mr. Dodd had been noticed in the University of Cambridge for some of his exercises, he made himself known to the public by an English poetical translation of Callimachus, in which he discovered a poetical genius. Of the preface to the translation of Callimachus, which gives the best general account that was ever given in so short a compass, of the Heathen Mythology, the greater part was written for him by Mr. Horne. It is supposed, with good reason, that Mr. Dodd was obliged to others of his friends for several useful notes on the text of Callimachus. He makes a particular acknowledgment to the Rev. Mr. Parkhurst, "from whose sound judgment, enlarged understanding, unwearied application, and generous openness of heart, the world has great and valuable fruits to expect." Archbishop Secker conceived a favorable opinion of Mr. Dodd, from his performances in the pulpit; and it was probably owing to the influence of the archbishop, that he was appointed to preach the sermons at Lady Moyer's Lectures. But this unhappy gentleman, having a strong desire, like many other young men of parts, to make a figure in the world, with a turn to an expensive way of living; and finding that his friends, who unhappily were suffering under the damnatory title of *Hutchinsonians*, would never be permitted (as the report then was) to rise to any eminence in the church; Mr. Dodd thought it more prudent to leave them to their fate, with the hope of succeeding better in some other way: and, to purge himself in the eye of the world, he wrote expressly against them; laying many grievous things to their charge; some of which were true, when applied to particular persons; some greatly exaggerated; and some utterly false; as it may well be imagined, when it is considered that the author was writing to serve an interest.*

There could be no better judge than Mr. Dodd himself, of the motives on which he had assumed a new character. He certainly did himself some good, in the opinion of those who thought he was grown wiser; but being sensible how far he had carried some things, and how much he had lost himself in the esteem of his old friends, he was anxious to know what some of them said about him. He therefore applied himself one day to a lady of great understanding and piety, who knew him well, and who also knew most of them, desiring her to tell him, what Mr. such-a-one said of him? He says of you, answered she—*Demas hath forsaken us, having loved this present world:* with which he appeared to be much affected. Not that the thing had actually been said, so far as I know,† by the person in question; but she, knowing the propriety with which it might have been said, gave him the credit of it. There was a general appearance of vanity about Mr. Dodd, which was particularly dis-

* See Mr. Horne's Apology (hereafter to be spoken of) where this conference with Mr. Forster is alluded to.

* When it was under deliberation whether any answer should be given to this book of Mr. Dodd, Mr. Horne objected to it in the following terms, which discover his great prudence and judgment: "Whoever shall answer it, will be under the necessity of appearing as a partisan, which in these times should be avoided as much as possible. I had much rather the name of Hutchinson were dropped, and the useful things in him recommended to the world, with their evidence, in another manner than they have been. Mankind are tired and sick (I am sure I am for one) with the fruitless squabbles and altercations about etymologies and particularities. In the mean time, the great plan of philosophy and theology, that must instruct and edify, lies dormant."

† But I am now informed, it actually was said.

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gusting to Mr. Horne, who had none of it himself; and the levity with which he had totally cast off his former studies being added to it, both together determined him to drop the acquaintance with little hesitation. He not only avoided his company, but conceiving a dislike as well to his moral as to his literary character, is supposed to have given such an account of him in one of the public papers, as made him very ridiculous, under the name of *Tom Dingle*. Not long afterwards Mr. Foote brought him upon the stage, for a transaction which reflected great dishonor upon a clergyman, and for which the king ordered him to be struck off the list of his chaplains.

The revolt of Mr. Dodd, if he meant to raise himself in the world by it, did by no means answer his purpose. It brought him into favor with Lord Chesterfield; but that did much more hurt to his mind, than good to his fortune. The farther he advanced in life, the more he became embarrassed: and his moral conduct was commonly known to be so far depraved, that a late celebrated gentleman of Clapham, who was privy to it, is said to have predicted, some years before, that he would come to an untimely end. How unsearchable are the wisdom and justice of divine providence! The worldly policy of Dr. Dodd lost him the friendship of some wise and good men, particularly of Mr. Horne, but procured for him the favor of Lord Chesterfield; and that favor tempted him to another step of policy, which brought him to his death. The memory of Dr. Johnson is much to be honored for the tender part he took in behalf of Dr. Dodd during the time of his affliction. And let it be remembered in justice to his former friends, that few persons were more deeply affected by his lamentable end than some of those who had been under the necessity of dropping his acquaintance. I have it on the best authority, that one of them kept a solemn fast till night on the day of his execution, and afterwards moralized very seriously upon his fate in one of the newspapers of the time.

From this account of Mr. Horne's friends and acquaintance, I return now to the history of his studies. When a young man of a vigorous mind determines, in these latter days of the church, to make himself learned, he is in great danger, from the books he may read, and the company into which he may fall, notwithstanding the integrity of his mind and the purity of his intentions. If he join himself to a party, he will be under the influence of an affection which is very properly called partiality; and which inclines him to favor the measures of his party indiscriminately, and therefore does great hurt to the judgment. He is apt to praise and censure, to love and hate, not with his own spirit, but with the spirit of his party. With their singularities, whatever they may be, he will find little fault; and if they have errors, they are such as he will not soon discover. To this danger Mr. Horne was exposed as a reader of Hutchinson. I shall therefore describe it more particularly, and show how and by what means he escaped it in all its parts, and preserved the independency of his understanding; in doing which, if I can do it faithfully, I shall certainly make myself of some use to the public.

Mr. Hutchinson fell into a new and uncommon train of thinking in philosophy, theology, and Heathen antiquity; and appears to have learned much of it from the Hebrew, which he studied in a way of his own: but as he laid too great a stress in many instances on the evidence of Hebrew etymology, his admirers would naturally do the same: and some of them carried the matter so far, that nothing else would go down with them; till, by degrees, they adopted a mode of speaking which had a nearer resemblance to cant and jargon, than to sound and sober learning. To this weakness those persons were most liable who had received the fewest advantages from a learned education. This was the case with some sensible tradesmen and mechanics, who, by studying Hebrew, with the assistance of English only, grew conceited of their learning, and carried too much sail with too little ballast. Of this Mr. Horne was very soon aware; and he was in so little danger of following the example, that I used to hear him display the foibles of such persons with that mirth and good humor which he had ready at hand upon all occasions. With the like discretion and candor, he allowed to the Rev. Dr. Sharp, of Durham, all that could reasonably be allowed, when he attacked the followers of Hutchinson upon the etymological quarter, where they seemed most vulnerable, or, where they might at least be annoyed with most appearance of advantage: and he never, through the whole course of his life, was a friend to the etymological part of the controversy, as it appears from his writings; in which Hebrew etymology, however he might apply to it for himself, is rarely, if ever, insisted upon. In some of his private letters, one of which has been already referred to in a note, he declared his mind very freely on the expediency of squabbling about words, when there were so many things to be brought forward which were of

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greater importance, and would admit of less dispute.

A farther danger arose from that custom in which some of the followers of Mr. Hutchinson had too freely indulged themselves, of treating their opponents with too great asperity and contempt. Hutchinson himself was very reprehensible in this respect, as well in his conversation as in his writings; and thereby lost much of that influence with men of learning which he might have preserved, had he considered it as a duty to be more temperate and flexible in his manner of addressing the public. But he was a man of a warm and hasty spirit, like Martin Luther; who to certain modern speculations in philosophy and theology, could preserve no more respect than Luther did to the errors of popery. How far the circumstances they both were under, the zeal by which they were actuated, and the provocations they met with from the world, will justify them in the use of intemperate language, can be known only to God, to whom they must give an account. But whatever excuses may be made for the principals, we do not see how they can be extended to those who succeeded. Some of these, however, did claim for themselves the like privilege, and gave great offence to persons of cooler judgment. The world will not suffer things to be forced upon them. When men are angry, it is always supposed they have but little to say, and are provoked by a sense of the insufficiency of themselves and their cause. It was a wise saying of Lord Coke, the famous lawyer, "Whatever grief a man hath, ill words work no good, and learned counsel never use them." To this wise and excellent maxim the followers of Mr. Hutchinson did not in general attend as they ought to have done. It filled them with indignation to see how little they prevailed against the perverse treatment of some ill-disposed adversaries: and, if they had found such principles as they thought of use to themselves, it was a mortification to see them overlooked and disdained by others. But there was so much sweetness in the natural temper of Mr. Horne, that no bitter weed could take root there; and the intemperance of others only served to put him the more upon his guard; of which we have a happy example in his State of the Case between Sir Isaac Newton and Mr. Hutchinson. This was one of his earliest compositions; in which the argument is conducted throughout with perfect modesty, civility, and a proper respect to all parties. I have heard him admire greatly that calmness for which the Chinese are so remarkable, although it borders in some degree upon cunning or stupidity. "The only way for a man to gain the favor of the Chinese, is to set forth his reasons in the coolest manner; that people being of such a disposition, as to despise the most rational arguments if delivered with anger." The same, said he, is true of mankind in general.

The learning, which disposes us to affect a superiority over other men is too generally attended by a forgetfulness of God: and it has therefore been well observed, that knowledge, though a good thing in itself, as light is when compared with darkness, is apt to puff us up; while charity, which is an humble and submissive virtue, edifieth, that is, builds us up in the way of grace, and makes us better Christians. So far as knowledge, though of the purest sort, infuses pride, just so far it extinguishes devotion. It was therefore objected to the new Hebrew students, that they were a carnal sort of people, so full of Scriptural learning as to be much wanting in a due regard to Scriptural piety. The intelligent reader will easily guess from what quarter such an accusation would arise. It came from those who are apt to offend in another way; who suppose that an appearance of godly zeal, and a passion to save souls, will supply the defects of Christian knowledge: but without it, there will not be Christian prudence; and such persons, neglecting to inform themselves, suffer under the want of judgment, and are carried into delusion, of which they do not see the consequences. Ignorant piety, like ignorant ingenuity, must go to school before it will be able to work surely and with good effect. It must itself be taught before it can be fit to teach others. The great Lord Bacon observed of the first Puritans, that they reasoned powerfully on the necessity of a serious piety; and brought men well to the question, *what must I do to be saved?* but when they had done this, they were at a loss how to give them an answer. There is danger to man on every side: learning is tempted to overlook piety, and piety thinks there is no use of learning. Happy is he who preserves himself from both these errors; who, while he seeks wisdom, applies it first to the reformation of his own life, and then to the lives of other men! This appears to have been the persuasion of Mr. Horne; in whose earliest writings we find such a tincture of devotion, that some of his readers, who valued themselves upon their discernment, thought his warmth discovered a degree of enthusiasm; that he was devout overmuch; and consequently we have the testimony of such persons, that he was not wanting in Christian

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piety. Thus much at least may be affirmed, that he was in no danger of an outward formal religion, destitute of the vital spirit of Christianity.

There was yet another danger to be apprehended, and that of no small concern to a member of the church of England. It happened, that among the admirers of Mr. Hutchinson there were many dissenters; who, with all the information they had acquired, did not appear (as might reasonably have been expected) to be much softened in their prejudices against the constitution of this church. With some of these Mr. Horne frequently fell into company; of which it was not an improbable consequence (and he afterwards was aware of it) that he might come by degrees to be less affected than he ought to be to the church of which he was a member; especially as there was some jealousy already in the minds of Mr. Hutchinson's readers against their superiors both in church and state, on account of the unfair and angry treatment (I may say, persecution) some of them had suffered, and the dislike and aversion which their principles had met with from persons of established reputation. The modest and civil Letter to a Bishop, from the lord president of the court of session in Scotland, the Honorable Duncan Forbes, had met with little or no attention; which, with many other slights and provocations, contributed to keep them in no very good humor; so that it was to be feared they would be too ready to hear what others might be too ready to suggest. With some of our dissenters, it is too much the custom to turn the clergy of the church and their profession into ridicule; a sort of behavior which should always be avoided by religious men, when religion is the subject. A piece was handed about, which calls itself a Dialogue upon Bishops; a sly and malignant invective, in a strain of irony, and by no means destitute of wit, against the prelates of this church. The thing is written in the same spirit with the Martin Mar-Prelate of the old Puritans, though in a superior strain of irony; and had for its author a man whose name was Biron, a dissenting teacher of eminence; whose works are collected together, and published, under the terrible title of *The Pillars of Priestcraft Shaken*. The church of England, whose religion is here intended by the word *priestcraft*, never had a more willing adversary than this man; unless it were Gordon, the author of the Independent Whig; whose writings, plentifully dispersed there, contributed not a little to the revolt of America, by rendering the Americans more disaffected to the religion of the mother country.

So long as a connection remained with the non-conforming readers of Mr. Hutchinson, it was expected by them, that all church differences would be laid aside, as matters of no signification; and that both parties would join hands against the common enemies of Christianity. Things being thus disposed, an occurrence intervened, to which Mr. Horne, as it appears from some of his letters, imputed the breach which afterwards took place, and his own deliverance, in consequence of it, from all danger of fanatical infection.

Dr. Clayton, then Bishop of Clogher in Ireland, in the year 1750, published his Essay on Spirit, with design to recommend the Arian doctrine, and to prepare the way for suitable alterations in the liturgy. The favorers of heresy are seldom found to be the enemies of schism: this author, therefore, to strengthen his party, distinguished himself as a warm friend to the cause of the sectaries; intimidating the church with the prospect of destruction, unless the safety of it were provided for by a timely compliance with the demands of its adversaries. This essay, being reported to come from a person of such eminence in the church, alarmed her friends and animated her enemies. It carried with it a show of learning, and some subtilty of argument: an answer to it was, therefore, expected and wished for.

It happened at this time, that I was settled at Finedon in Northamptonshire, as curate to the Rev. Sir John Dolben; which I have reason to remember as a most happy circumstance in the early part of my life. In this situation I was frequently visited by my friend and fellow-student Mr. Horne. He came to me, possessed with a desire of seeing an answer to this Essay on Spirit; and persuaded me to undertake it. All circumstances being favorable, no objection was made; and accordingly down we sat together for a whole month to the business. The house of my patron Sir John Dolben had an excellent library; a considerable part of which had descended from Archbishop Dolben; and it was furnished with books in every branch of reading, as well ancient as modern, but particularly in divinity and ecclesiastical history. In a country parish, without such an advantage, our attempt had been wild and hopeless: but with it, we had no fear of being at a loss concerning any point of learning that might arise. What Bishop Clayton (supposing him to be the author of an Essay on Spirit) had offered in favor of the non-conformists, obliged us to look into the controversy between them and the church, which as yet we had never considered; and to consult such historians as had given a faithful account of it. This inquiry brought many

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things to our view of which we had never heard; and contributed very much to confirm us in the profession to which we had been educated: but, at the same time, it raised in our minds some new suspicions against our non-conforming friends; and the occasion called upon us to say some things which it could not be very agreeable to them to hear, so long as they persisted in their separation. In every controversy, their will be some rough places, over which the tender-footed will not be able to pass without being hurt; and when this happens, they will probably lay upon others that fault which is to be found only in themselves. It happened as might be expected. When the Answer was published, great offence was taken; and they who had argued for us, as Christians, in a common cause, began now to show themselves as enemies to the church of England. They addressed themselves to us in such a strain, to the one by letter, to the other in conversation, as had no tendency to soften or conciliate; for it breathed nothing but contempt and defiance. It had, therefore, the good effect of obliging us to go on still farther in our inquiries, that we might be able to stand our ground. To this occurrence it was first owing, that Mr. Horne became so well learned in the controversy between the church and the sectaries, and was confirmed for life in his attachment to the church of England.* It was another happy circumstance, that, in the issue, by persons of more impartiality, the Answer to the Essay on Spirit, on which we had bestowed so much labor, was very favorably received, especially in Ireland, where it was most wanted. The work was rendered more useful by the opportunity it gave us of explaining some abstruse articles in the learning of antiquity; particularly the Hermetic, Pythagorean, and Platonic Trinities; which the writer of the Essay had pressed into his service, to distract the minds of his readers, without pretending to know the sense of them. We had the advantage of the author in this subject, from having been permitted to look into some manuscript papers of a learned gentleman, who had spent several years of his life in studying the mysteries of the ancient Greek philosophy; which, at the bottom, always proved to be materialism. In this the speculations of Heathen philosophers naturally ended; and so do the speculations of those moderns who follow them in their ways of reasoning.

From our frequent intercourse with the library above-mentioned, we had the good fortune to meet with the works of the Rev. Charles Leslie, in two volumes folio, which may be considered as a library in themselves to any young student of the church of England; and no such person, who takes a fancy to what he there finds, can ever fall into Socinianism, fanaticism, popery, or any other of those more modern corruptions which infest this church and nation. Every treatise comprehended in that collection is incomparable in its way: and I shall never forget how Mr. Horne expressed his astonishment, when he had perused what Mr. Leslie calls *The History of Sin and Heresy;* which, from the hints that are found in the Scriptures, gives an account how they, sin and heresy, were generated among the angels before the beginning of the world: "It is," said he, "as if the man had looked into heaven, to see what passed there on occasion of Lucifer's rebellion."

In reading Mr. Leslie's Socinian controversy, he was highly amused with a curiosity which the author, by good fortune, though with great difficulty, had procured and presented to the public in an English translation from the Arabic. It is a letter addressed to the Morocco ambassador, by two of the Socinian fraternity in England, who called themselves *Two Single Philosophers,* and and proposed a religious comprehension with the Turks; the said Socinians having discovered, that the Turks and themselves were so nearly of one opinion, that very little was wanting on either side to unite them in the same communion. The present very learned Bishop of Rochester, Dr. Horsley, lighted upon the same thing many years after-

* The following extract from a long letter will show how his mind was employed at the time when it was written: "I have been reading some of the works of Dr. George Hickes against the Romanists. He is a sound and acute reasoner, and differs from Leslie in this, that whereas Leslie's method was to single out one point which he calls the *jugulum causæ*, and stick to that; Hickes follows them through all their objections, unravels their sophistry, and confirms all he says with exact and elaborate proofs. He shows the greatest knowledge of primitive antiquity, of fathers, councils, and the constitution and discipline of the church in the first and purest ages of it. This kind of learning is of much greater value and consequence than many now apprehend. What, next after the Bible, can demand a Christian's attention before the history of the church, purchased by the blood of Christ, founded by inspired apostles, and actuated by a spirit of love and unity, which made a heaven upon earth even in the midst of persecution, and enabled them to lay down their lives for the truth's sake? Much I am sure is done by that cementing bond of the spirit, which unites Christians to their head and to one another, and makes them consider themselves as members of the same body, that is, as a church, as a fold of sheep, not as straggling individuals. What I see of this in a certain class of writers determines me to look into that affair." Such a man as this, so far advanced in the days of his youth, would pay but little regard to shallow reasonings and hasty language from the enemies of uniformity.

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wards, and was so much struck with its singularity, that he has referred to it in his works, to show how naturally the religion of the Socinians ends in the enthusiasm of Mahomet.

The sight of Mr. Leslie's two theological folios, prepared Mr. Horne for the reading such of his political works as should afterwards fall in his way: and it was not long before he met with a periodical paper, under the title of *The Rehearsals*, which the author had published in the time of Queen Anne, when the infidels and dissenters were most busy; and had conceived strong hopes (as they said themselves) of destroying the established church. This paper boldly encountered all their arguments, dissected Sidney and Locke, confuted the republican principles, and exposed all the designs of the party. That party, however, had, at that time, interest enough to get the paper, which bore so hard upon them suppressed by authority; but not till the writer had done the best of his work; which made him boast, notwithstanding what had happened, that he had sown those seeds of orthodoxy and loyalty in this kingdom, which *all the devils in hell would never be able to root out of it.* This singular work, then lately reprinted in six volumes (1750,) fell into the hands of Mr. Horne, at Oxford, and was examined with equal curiosity and attention. According to his own account, he had profited greatly by the reading of it; and the work, which gave to one man of genius and discernment so much satisfaction, must have had its effect on many others; insomuch that it is highly probable, the loyalty found amongst us at this day, and by which the nation has of late been so happily preserved, may have grown up from some of the seeds then sown by Mr. Leslie: and I have some authority for what I say.* This I know, that the reading of that work begat in the mind of Mr. Horne an early and strict attention to those political differences, and the grounds of them, which have at sundry times agitated this country, and disturbed public affairs.

In the year when the *Jew-Bill* was depending, and after it had passed the house, he frequently employed himself in sending to an evening paper of the time certain communications, which were much noticed; while the author was totally unknown, except to some of his nearest acquaintance. By the favor of a great lady, it was my fortune (though then very young) to be at a table where some persons of the first quality were assembled; and I heard one of them* very earnest on the matter and style of some of these papers, of which I knew the secret history; and was not a little diverted when I heard what passed about them. To the author of those papers the *Jew-Bill* gave much offence, and the *Marriage-Bill* not much less. He was highly gratified by the part taken in that perilous business by the Rev. William Romaine, who opposed the *Considerations* dispersed about the kingdom in defence of the Jew-Bill, with a degree of spirit and success, which reminded us of Swift's opposition to Wood's halfpence in his Drapier's Letters.

Mr. Horne having entered upon his first Hebrew studies, not without an ardent piety, he was ready to lay hold of every thing that might advance him in the knowledge and practice of the Christian life. He accordingly made himself well acquainted with the serious practical writings of the Rev. William Law, which, I believe, were first recommended to him by Mr. Hamilton, afterwards archdeacon of Raphoe, in Ireland, or by the Rev. Dr. Patten, of Corpus Christi College. He conformed himself in many respects to the strictness of Mr. Law's rules of devotion; but without any danger of falling, as so many did, after Mr. Law's example, into the stupendous reveries of Jacob Behmen, the German theosophist. From this he was effectually secured by his attachment to the doctrines and forms of the primitive church, in which he was well grounded by the writings of Leslie, and also of the primitive fathers, some of which had become familiar to him, and very highly esteemed. But being sensible how easy it was for many of those who took their piety from Mr. Law to take his errors along with it, he drew up a very useful paper, for the security of such persons as might not have judgment enough to distinguish properly, under the title of *Cautions to the Readers of Law*:† and excellent they are for the purpose intended; they show the goodness of his heart and the soundness of his judgment.

Some worthy ladies, who were in the habit of reading Mr. Law, had from thence filled their heads with several of the wild notions of Jacob Behmen, and were zealous in making proselytes. A lady of fashion in Ireland, of the first rate for beauty, elegance, and accomplishment, was going apace into this way, at the instance of a proselyting acquaint-

* No farther proof of this will be wanting to those intelligent persons who have read the learned Mr. Whitaker's Real Origin of Government, one of the greatest and best pieces the times have produced.

* Lord Temple.

† This paper is given in the Appendix.

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ance. Her situation was known and lamented; and it was earnestly wished that somebody would undertake to open her eyes before she was too far gone. Mr. Horne, though much interested in the success of such an attempt, did not take the office upon himself, but committed it to a friend; and the paper produced the desired effect.

When the writings of Leslie, or Law, or Hutchinson, were before Mr. Horne, he used them with judgment and moderation, to qualify and temper each other: he took what was excellent from all, without admitting what was exceptionable from any. To his academical Greek and Latin, he had added a familiar acquaintance with the Hebrew; and having found his way to the Christian fathers, I consider him now as a person furnished with every light, and secured from every danger which could possibly occur to him as a member of the church of England; and consequently well prepared for any service which the times might require of him. In English divinity he had also greatly improved himself by the writings of Dr. Jackson, and Dr. Jeremy Taylor; from the latter of which, I suppose him to have derived much of that mildness and devotion for which he was afterwards so conspicuous.* The former, Dr. Jackson, is a magazine of theological learning, every where penned with great elegance and dignity, so that his style is a pattern of perfection. His writings, once thought inestimable by every body but the Calvinists, had been greatly neglected, and would probably have continued so, but for the praises bestowed upon them by the celebrated Mr. Merrick, of Trinity College, in Oxford, who brought them once more into repute with many learned readers. The early extracts of Mr. Horne, which are now remaining, show how much information he derived from this excellent writer; who deserves to be numbered with the English fathers of the church. That there cannot be in the church of England a useful scholar unless he is precise in following the same track of learning, I will not presume to say: but this I shall always think, that if we are ever to see another Mr. Horne, a commentator so learned, a preacher so evangelical, a writer so accomplished, a Christian so exemplary, he must come out of the same school.

With his mind thus furnished, the time drew near when he was to take holy orders. This was a serious affair to him; and he entered upon it, as every candidate ought to do, with a resolution to apply the studies he had followed to the practice of his ministry, and, above all the rest, his study of the Holy Scripture. Soon after he had been ordained, on Trinity Sunday, 1753, by the Bishop of Oxford, he related the circumstance by letter to an intimate friend, not without adding the following petition, which is well worth preserving: "May he, who ordered Peter three times to feed his lambs, give me grace, knowledge, and skill, to watch and attend to the flock which he purchased upon the cross, and to give rest to those who are under the burden of sin or sorrow! It hath pleased God to call me to the ministry in very troublesome times indeed; when a lion and a bear have broken into the fold, and are making havoc among the sheep. With a firm, though humble confidence, do I purpose to go forth; not in my own strength, but in the strength of the Lord God; and may he prosper the work of my hands!" He came to me, then resident upon the Curacy of Finedon in Northamptonshire, to preach his first sermon; to which, as it might be expected, I listened with no small attention, under an assurance that his doctrine would be good, and that he was capable of adorning it to a high degree with beautiful language and a graceful delivery. The discourse he then preached, though excellent in its kind, is not printed among his other works. Scrupulous critics, he thought, might be of opinion that he had given too great scope to his imagination, and that the text, in the sense he took it, was not a foundation solid enough to build so much upon. This was his sentiment when his judgment was more mature; and he seems to me to have judged rightly. Yet the discourse was admirable in respect of its composition and its moral tendency. Give me an audience of well disposed Christians, among whom there are no dry moralists, no fastidious critics, and I would stake my life upon the hazard of pleasing them all by the preaching of that sermon. With farther preparation, and a little more experience, he preached in a more public pulpit, before one of the largest and most polite congregations at London. The preacher, whose place he supplied, but who attended in the church on purpose to hear him, was so much affected by what he had heard, and the manner in which it was delivered, that when he visited me shortly after in the country, he was so full of this sermon,

* From many passages which might be produced from his private letters and his printed works, no English writer seems to have taken his fancy, and fallen in so exactly with his own disposition, as Dr. Taylor; first in his Life of Christ, then in his Ductor Dubitantium, or Rule of Conscience, and afterwards in his Rule and Exercise of Holy Dying, which he calls a Golden Tract, and the author of it, the inimitable Bishop Jeremy Taylor. See his Commentary on Psalm cxix. v. 71.

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that he gave me the matter and the method of it by heart; pronouncing at the end of it, what a writer of his life ought never to forget, that —— "George Horne was, without exception, the best preacher in England." Which testimony was the more valuable, because it came from a person who had, with many people, the reputation of being such himself. This sermon is preserved; and if the reader should be a judge, and will take the pains to examine it, he will think it merits what is here said of it. The subject is the second advent of Christ to judgment. The text is from Rev. i. 7. *Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so. Amen.*

Besides his talent for preaching, which from the beginning promised (and has now produced) great things; Mr. Horne had obtained so high a character at Oxford for his humanity, condescension, and piety, that his reputation came to the ears of a criminal in the castle, under sentence of death for one of the many high-way robberies he had committed. The name of this man was Dumas; he was an Irishman by birth; and his appearance and address had so much of the gentleman, that he was a person of the first rank in his profession. This man having heard of Mr. Horne as a person remarkable for his sense and goodness, requested the favor of his attendance; to which, on a principle of conscience, he consented; though the office was such as would probably put the tenderness of his mind to a very severe trial. And so it proved in the event; his health being considerably affected for some time afterwards. I do not find among his papers any minutes of this affair preserved in writing;* and though he gave me a large account of it, to which I could not but listen with great attention, I cannot recollect so much of it as I wish to do at this distance of time. This I know, that he used to think anxiously with himself, day and night, in what manner he should address this unhappy man, and what kind of spiritual counsel would be most likely to succeed with him; for he found him, though ready and sensible enough in all common things, deplorably destitute of all religious knowledge. To the best of my remembrance he always chose to be quite alone with him when he attended; and, by repeated applications and constant prayer, recommended by his mild and engaging manner, thought he had made some considerable impression upon his mind. In the last conference before his execution, he thanked Mr. Horne very heartily for his goodness to him, and used these very remarkable words; "Sir, you may, perhaps, wonder at what I am about to tell you; but, I do assure you, I feel at this moment no more sense of fear, than I should do if I were going a common journey." To this Mr. Horne answered, that he was indeed very much surprised; but he hoped it was upon a right principle. And so let us hope; though the criminal was scarcely explicit enough to give due satisfaction, whether this indifference proceeded from Christian hope or constitutional hardness. The conversation between the ordinary and the prisoner the evening before he suffered (as Mr. Horne related it, who was present at the interview,) consisted chiefly in an exact description of all the particulars of the ceremonial which the prisoner was to go through in the way to his death; and of course had very little either of comfort or instruction in it. The feelings of that gentleman, who had attended the executions for several years, were very different from those of his assistant; and he spoke of the approaching execution with as little emotion, as if Mr. Dumas had taken a place for the next morning in an Oxford coach. He even amused himself with telling them the story of another unhappy criminal, who had nothing of the fortitude of Mr. Dumas; a person of the law, put to death for forgery, whose heart had failed him at the time of his execution: "There was poor *Paul*," said he, "we could not make him rise in the morning—he would not get up—I thought we should never have got him hanged that day," &c. Such is the effect of custom and habit upon some minds!

Thus was Mr. Horne initiated early into the most difficult duty of the pastoral charge, the visitation of the sick and dying: a work of extreme charity; but for which all men are not equally fit; some, because they have too little tenderness; others, because they have too much. It is a blessing that there are many helps and directions for those who wish to improve themselves. The office in the liturgy is excellent in its kind, but it doth not come up to all cases. Among the posthumous papers of Bishop Horne, I find an inestimable manuscript, which it is probably he might begin to compile for his own use about this time, and partly for the occasion of which I have been speaking. He was by no means unacquainted with the matter and the language of prayer; having shown to me, as we were upon a walk one summer's evening in the country, when he was a very young man, that precious composition of Bishop Andrews,

* But the prayers he composed for the occasion are in one of his MSS.

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the first copy of which occurred to him in the library of Magdalen College; on which he set so great a value during the rest of his life, that while he was Dean of Canterbury, he published, after the example of the excellent Dean Stanhope, his predecessor, a handsome English edition of it. The original is in Greek and Latin; and it happened some time after Mr. Horne had first brought the work into request, that a great number of copies of the Greek and Latin edition were discovered in a warehouse at Oxford, where they had lain undisturbed in sheets for many years. In the copy published after Dean Stanhope's form, the Manual for the Sick, though the best thing extant upon its subject, is wholly omitted: but in the posthumous manuscript I speak of, the whole is put together, with improvements by the compiler; and I wish all the parochial clergy in the nation were possessed of it.

We are now coming to a more busy period of Mr. Horne's life, the year 1756, when he was called upon to be an apologist for himself and some of his friends, against the attack of a literary adversary.

In the controversy about Hebrew names, and their doubtful interpretations, in which the learned Dr. Sharp of Durham was prevailed upon (as it is reported, much against his will) to engage, Mr. Horne never interfered; as being of opinion that, if all that part of Mr. Hutchinson's system were left to its fate, the most useful and valuable parts of it would still remain, with their evidences from the Scripture, the natural world, and the testimony of sacred and profane antiquity. He was likewise of opinion, that where *words* are the subject, words may be multiplied without end; and the witnesses of the dispute, at least the majority of them, having no competent knowledge of so uncommon a subject, would be sure to go as fashion and the current of the times should direct. That a zealous reader of the Hebrew, captivated by the curiosity of its etymologies, should pursue them beyond the bounds of prudence, is not to be wondered at. Many Hebrew etymologies are so well founded, and throw so much light on the learning of antiquity and the origin of languages, that no man can be a complete philologist without a proper knowledge of them. The learned well know how useful Mr. Bryant has endeavored to make himself of late years by following them: and yet, it must be confessed that, with all his learning, he has many fancies and peculiarities of his own, which he would find it difficult to maintain. If Mr. Hutchinson and his followers have been sometimes visionary in their criticisms, and carried things too far, it does not appear that the worst of their interpretations are so bad as those of some learned critics in the last century, who, from the allowed primævity of their favorite language, applied it without discretion to every thing. All the names in Homer's Illiad and Odyssey were hebraized, and all his fables were derived from some history or other in the Bible; and this to such a degree as was utterly improbable, and even childish and ridiculous.* Such are the weaknesses to which great scholars are subject, in common with other men; sometimes for want of light, and sometimes for want of discretion; and the greatest scholars of this age are not without them. Dr. Horne, I have reason to think, did so much justice to the criticisms of Dr. Sharp as to read them carefully; which is more than I dare say of myself; and I may plead in my behalf the example of my learned and respectable friend Granville Sharp, Esq., the son of the archdeacon; who very ingenuously owned to me, that he had never read his father's books on the Hutchinsonian controversy; perhaps, because he is as little inclined to logomachy as I am. However, I have seen enough to discover from the general tenor of them, that it seems to have been the design of that learned author to raise difficulties, and throw things into the shade; in which he has apparently succeeded. When I look into a writer of the Hutchinsonian persuasion, though I may suspect his criticisms, and dislike his manner, I am animated by his zeal, and generally learn something useful; but when I look into the criticisms of Dr. Sharp, I learn nothing: I feel cold and dissatisfied with all languages and all science; as if the Scripture itself were out of tune, and divinity a mere dispute. It is, therefore, my persuasion, that his writings have done little service to theology or philology, but that they have operated rather as a discouragement; for who will labor, if there be no prospect of coming to any determination one way or the other? That I am not taking a part against Dr. Sharp, but that Dr. Sharp did in this respect take a part against himself, is evident from his own words; which do plainly declare, that his object in writing against the followers of Hutchinson was, to "prove the uncertainty of something affirmed to be certain." I know of some who took the contrary part, endeavoring to prove "the

* If the curious reader can meet with a book under the title of Ομηρος Εβραιζων, he will see this plan, of deriving all things from the Hebrew, carried to extremity. He may also find other examples, but not so extravagant, in Gale's Court of the Gentiles.

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certainty of something affirmed to be uncertain;" and I think they were more hopefully employed; for where uncertainty is the prize, what encouragement is there to strive for it? Mr. Horne, who knew the value of his time, had no inclination to waste any of it in this endless chase of verbal criticism; and I have reason to think that, if there was any study in particular to which he took a complete aversion, it was the Hutchinsonian controversy about a few Hebrew words.*

Another dispute soon arose, after that of Dr. Sharp, which was of much greater concern; and so Mr. Horne thought, from the part he took in it. How he acquitted himself, the reader must judge when he has heard the particulars.

With many young scholars in the University of Oxford, the principles of Mr. Hutchinson began to be in such esteem, that some member of the university, who was in the opposite interest, or had no fancy to that way, made a very severe attack upon them in an anonymous pamphlet, entitled, *A Word to the Hutchinsonians;* and Mr. Horne, being personally struck at, as the principal object of the author's animadversions, was obliged to take up the pen in defence of himself and his friends. The public in general, and Mr. Horne in particular, by some very broad hints, gave the thing to Mr. Kennicott, of Exeter College, a man of parts, and a clear agreeable writer, who had very justly acquired some fame for his skill in the Hebrew language. His two dissertations, one on the Tree of Life, and the other on the Sacrifices of Cain and Abel, were in many hands, and so well approved, that some farther and better fruit of his studies might reasonably be expected. As to the author of this anonymous pamphlet, I can affirm nothing positively from my own knowledge: I can only relate what was told me by Dr. Golding, of New College, who was afterwards warden of Winchester. From this gentleman I heard what had happened to himself in regard to the publication above-mentioned, and what his own sentiments were. Soon after it appeared, Mr. Kennicott accosted him in a bookseller's shop, "Dr. Golding, I give you joy on being the author of a very ingenious pamphlet, called A Word to the Hutchinsonians." "Indeed," said Dr. Golding, "I was not the author of it; but I believe you know who was." When an answer had appeared, with the name of Mr. Horne to it, Dr. Golding, meeting Mr. Kennicott in the street, said, "Well, Mr. Kennicott, and who is the author of the Word to the Hutchinsonians *now*?" Which question was only answered by a laugh. The Dr. Golding of whom I am speaking, had been a preacher much approved in the pulpit of the university, and had contended with some zeal for the principles of Hutchinson: but had now the reputation of having forsaken them all; which report might possibly give occasion to Mr. Kennicott's compliment; it being not improbable, that a person who could forsake them would make it his next step (as Dr. Dodd afterwards did) to write against them. He had been an intimate friend to the above-mentioned Mr. Watson, of University College, who had recommended him to travel as a tutor with the Earl of Dartmouth and Mr. North, afterwards Lord North and Lord Guilford, with whom he spent some time abroad. He was undoubtedly a man of learning and ability: but being under the repute of having renounced some principles he had once received, I was very desirous to know how that matter might be: and Dr. Golding, at my request, was so obliging as to do me the honor of a visit, while I lived at a private house in Oxford. I told him plainly, that there were some opinions of Hutchinson in natural philosophy, which, when properly distinguished, did appear to me to be true, and, as such, worth recommending to the world: and that, as I had some intention of taking the office upon myself, I should esteem it as a great favor, if he, being a person of more years and experience, would communicate to me fairly those objections, which had taken effect upon his own mind; that if I should be staggered with them, my design might be laid aside. The doctor was full of pleasantry and good humor: gave me the whole story about the pamphlet, as above related, and spoke with great respect of Mr. Horne; but as to the particular object of my inquiry, his philosophical *reasons*, I could not succeed in drawing any one of them out of him, and am to this hour in the dark upon the subject. I shall not therefore indulge myself in speculations and conjectures, for which I have no authority; but only remark in general, what all men of discernment know to be true, that, as a man's opinions have an influence upon his expectations in this world, so his expec-

* I have here allowed more than I can strictly justify; and, by so doing, I have given advantage to some, and offence to others: I beg therefore to be rightly understood. In respect to Dr. Sharp, Mr. Horne was certainly of opinion, that the doctor had left the more useful and valuable parts of Mr. Hutchinson's system untouched: so I myself have thought, and been assured from that day to this; and I believe the reader will himself be of the same opinion, if he duly considers the contents of my *Preface*. Whatever dislike Mr. Horne might express toward the verbal disputes of that time, no man could set a greater value than he did on Hebrew learning discreetly followed and applied.

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tations in this world may have an influence upon his opinions. Hoping that I shall be pardoned for a small digression, not quite foreign to the subject in hand, I return now to Mr. Horne and his Apology,* of which I shall give a short view; but it is a work which cannot without injury, be abridged; as comprehending a great variety of subjects in a small compass.

The temper of it appears in the first page. The excellent Hooker had replied to a petulant adversary in the following very significant words: "Your next argument consists of railing and reasons. To your railing I say nothing: to your reasons I say what follows." "This sentence," says the apologist, "I am obliged to adopt, as the rule of my own conduct; the author I am now concerned with having mixed with his arguments a great deal of bitterness and abuse, which must do as little credit to himself as service to his cause. He is in full expectation of being heartily abused in return: but I have no occasion for that sort of artillery; and have learned besides, that *the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.* Therefore, in the words of the excellent Hooker, *to his railing I say nothing: to his reasons I say what follows.*"

To the charge of being a Hutchinsonian, a name so invidiously applied, as a sectarian appellation, to himself and other readers of Hutchinson's writings, he answers, that, as Christians, they acknowledge no Master but one, that is Christ: that they were members only of The Church: and that, as all their reading had not formed them into a sect, they ought not to have a mark set upon them. "Is it not hard measure," says he, "that when a clergyman only preaches the doctrines and enforces the duties of Christianity from the Scriptures, his character shall be blasted, and himself rendered odious by the force of a name, which, in such cases, always signifies what the imposers please to mean, and the people to hate? There are many names of this kind now in vogue. If a man preaches Christ, that he is the end of the law, and the fulness of the Gospel—'You need not mind him; he is a Hutchinsonian.' If he mentions the assistance and direction of the Holy Spirit, with the necessity of prayer, mortification, and the taking up of the cross —'O, he is a Methodist!' If he talks of the divine right of episcopacy, with a word concerning the danger of schism—'Just going over to Popery!' And if he preaches obedience to King George—'You may depend upon it, he is a Pretender's man.' Many things may be ridiculed under their false titles, which it would not be so decent to laugh at under their true ones."

As to their being a sect or combination of separatists from the church-of-England Christians, "We do," says he, "most sincerely disavow the name and the thing. In the communion of the church of England we intend to die. To every zealous friend and promoter of the interest of Christianity, the Scriptures, and the church, we are ready cheerfully to give the right hand of fellowship, whether he be a reader of Mr. Hutchinson *or not*," &c. "They tell men," said their accuser, "that they, and they only, are the servants of the most high God, who show forth the way of salvation:"—"they labor to discredit all other preachers." "By no means," says the answerer; "they labor to discredit all false doctrines, preached by many who SHOULD preach the Gospel. It is the complaint of hundreds of serious and pious Christians, who never read or heard of Mr. Hutchinson, that there is at present a lamentable falling off from the OLD way of preaching and expounding the word of God. And, if there be such a defection from the primitive manner of preaching, the proper place wherein to speak of it is a university, where preachers are educated. If offence should be taken at this, I can only say, that, if any one will tell me how truth may be spoken, in such cases as these, without offending *some*, I will spare no labor to learn the art of it."

If any person wishes to know all the particular charges brought forward by this author, and how they are answered, he will find the pamphlet at large a very curious piece, and to that I would refer him: but some of these answers carry so much instruction, that I cannot refrain from extracting a few of them. To the charge of their insulting and trampling upon reason, under pretence of glorifying revelation, Mr. Horne answers: "The abuse, not the use, of reason, is what we argue against. Reason, we say, was made to learn, not to teach. What the eye is to the body, reason or understanding is to the soul; as saith the apostle, Eph. i. 18, having the eyes of your understanding enlightened. The eye is framed in such a manner as to be capable of seeing; reason in such a manner as to be capable of knowing. But the eye, though ever so good, cannot see without light; reason, though ever so perfect, cannot know without instruction. Therefore the phrase, light of reason, is improper; because it is as

* The title is—"An Apology for certain Gentlemen in the University of Oxford, aspersed in a late anonymous Pamphlet," &c. It is reprinted, with a new preface, in the sixth volume of the present edition. [The second volume of this American edition.]

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absurd to make reason its own informer, as to make the eye the source of its own light, whereas reason can be no more than the organ which receives instruction, as the eye admits the light of heaven. A man may as well take a view of things upon earth in a dark night by the light of his own eye, as discover the things of heaven, during the night of nature, by the light of his own reason," &c.

To another similar objection, often made against them, that they decry natural religion, it is answered, "To be sure, we do; because, at the best, it is a religion without the knowledge of the true God, or the hope of salvation; which is Deism: and it is a matter of fact, that, from Adam to this day, there never was, or could be, a man left to himself, to make a religion of nature. It is, we know, a received notion, that man, by a due and proper use of his reasoning faculties, may do great things: and so, by a due and proper use of the organs of vision, he may know much of the objects around him. But still, the pinching question returns; Is it not light that enables him to make a due and proper use of the one, and instruction of the other? Show us the eye that sees without light, and the understanding that reasons upon religion without instruction, and we will allow they both do it by the light of nature. Till then, let us hear no more of natural religion. And let me, on the subjects of reason and nature, recommend two books: the first, *Mr. Leslie's short and easy Method with the Deists;* where the debate between them and the Christians upon the evidence of revelation is brought to a single point, and their cause overthrown forever. This most excellent piece, with the other tracts of the same author usually bound with it, have, I thank God, entirely removed every doubt from my mind: and, in my poor opinion, they render the metaphysical performances upon the subject entirely useless. The second book I would recommend is *Dr. Ellis's Knowledge of Divine Things from Revelation, not from Reason or Nature.* In this book natural religion is fairly demolished."

Mr. Horne and his friends were farther charged with "a great contempt for learning." "But that," says he, "depends upon the nature and kind of the learning. Because sometimes a man is called a learned man, who, after a course of several years' hard study, can tell you, within a trifle, how many degrees of the non-entity of nothing must be annihilated, before it comes to be something. See King's Origin of Evil, ch. iii. p. 129, with the note. That such kind of learning as that book is filled with, and the present age is much given to admire, has done no service to the cause of truth, but on the contrary that it has done infinite disservice, and almost reduced us from the unity of Christian faith to the wrangling of philosophic scepticism, is the opinion of many besides ourselves, and too surely founded on fatal experience." "As to those who are engaged in the study of useful arts and sciences, languages, history, antiquities, physics, &c. &c. with a view to make them handmaids to divine knowledge; we honor their employment, we desire to emulate their industry, and most sincerely wish them good luck in the name of the Lord." The metaphysical system alluded to above was a book in great request at Cambridge, between the years 1740 and 1750; and was extolled by some young men who studied it, as a grand repository of human wisdom. The notes were written by Dr. Edmund Law, afterwards Bishop of Carlisle. Having heard so high a character of it, I once sat down to read it, with a prejudice in its favor. I afterwards showed it to Mr. Horne; and, when he had considered it, we could not but lament in secret, what he at length complained of in public, that a work so unfounded and so unprofitable should have engaged the attention, and excited the admiration, of scholars intended for the preaching of the Gospel. The account here given of it has something of the caricature; but the leading principle of the book is in substance as the apologist has described it.

Whoever the author of the pamphlet was, he seems to have entered upon his work with a persuasion that the gentlemen of Oxford, to whom he gives the name of Hutchinsonians, were in such disesteem with the world, so little known by some, and so much disliked by others, that any bold attack upon their characters would be sufficeint to run them down: and imagining that his book must have that effect, he foretells them how they must submit, in consequence of it, to "descend and sink into the deepest humiliation," &c. This is not criticism, but unmerciful outrage; and the author has so much of it, that the apologist, having collected it together, concludes with a very pathetic remonstrance: "These, sir, are *hard speeches* against men, of whom, their enemies themselves, being judges, must own, that they are sound in the faith, steady to the church, and regular in their duties—upon an impartial survey of all that has been said or written against us—I must declare, that *neither against the law, neither against the temple, neither against Cæsar*, is it proved that we have *offended anything at all*," &c. &c.

The reader may perhaps observe upon what I have presented to him, and he would

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see it more plainly, if he were to read the whole book, as I would advise him to do, that the dispute relates chiefly to the foundations of religion. Of Mr. Hutchinson we hear but little; his name was the match that gave fire to the train: but the question seems really to have been this; whether Christianity, in the truth and spirit of it, ought to be preserved; or whether a spiritless thing, called by the name of Christianity, would answer the purpose better: in other words, whether the religion of man's philosophy, or the religion of God's Revelation, should prevail. If this was the question, a more important one was never agitated since the beginning of the reformation; and every true Christian hath an interest in the issue of it. The temper with which Mr. Horne conducted himself, though under very great provocation, is very much to be admired. There never was a piece of invective more and completely taken down than in the Apology; the matter of it is both instructive and curious: several points of divinity, more than my short abstract would admit, are truly and clearly stated: and as to the characters of the writer himself and his friends, we see the crimes of which they were accused, and the defence they were able to make; of which defence those persons could form no judgment, who had taken their opinion of the parties from the *Reviews* and other disaffected publications of the time; unless they were wise enough to collect by inference, that where bad things were so much applauded, that which was dispraised and outraged must have some good in it. As to myself, I freely confess, I am to this hour delighted and edified by that Apology; and, after so many years, I see no reason to depart from any one of its doctrines; but should be thankful to God, if all the young clergy of this church were almost and altogether such as Mr. Horne was when he wrote it; and I heartily rejoice that it is now republished, that they have an opportunity of reading it, And I would advise, if it were possible, they should see what the learned Dr. Patten wrote in the same year; who was author of another Apology; which, with its defence against the Rev. Mr. Ralph Heathcote, displays the meekness of great learning against the vain blusterings of great assurance:* and, to show how the Reviews of this country impose upon the ignorant and the credulous, Mr. Heathcote was highly commended, and the character of Dr. Patten was taken from the representation of his adversary, without reading his book.*

But I must now proceed to another cause, which made more noise in the world, and is in itself of such importance that it ought never to be forgotten.

After his Apology, Mr. Horne took a part in the controversy with Mr. Kennicott on the text of the Hebrew Bible;† in which he and his friends so deeply interested themselves, on a principle of conscience as well as of literary evidence, that it is impossible for me to proceed in a task I have undertaken, without giving a plain and impartial account of what passed upon that occasion; and it will afford me an opportunity of bringing to light an extraordinary character of whom the world never heard.

Mr. Kennicott having distinguished himself as a person learned in the Hebrew, a proposal was set on foot by himself and his friends for collating the text of the Hebrew Bible, with such manuscripts as could *now* be procured; in order to reform the text, and prepare it for a new translation to be made from it into the English language. Mr. Kennicott explained at large the nature of this design, and attempted to prove the necessity of such a measure, in some learned dissertations on the state of the printed Hebrew Bibles. The design came at length to maturity; Mr. Kennicott himself was appointed the sole conductor of it; and such powerful interest was made in its behalf, that persons of the first honor and eminence supported it by an annual subscription to a very great amount. Manuscripts were collected from all parts of the world; and a company of collators were employed under the eye of Mr. Kennicott at Oxford; who gave an annual account, attested by Dr. Hunt, the Hebrew professor, of the state of the collation. The subscription was continued, and the work went on for several years. A new Hebrew Bible was at length printed in folio: a copy of the first volume of which came to the library of the Sorbonne, while I was at Paris, in the year 1776, and was shown to me by Mr. Asseline, the Hebrew professor of that time.‡

* What David Hume calls the illiberal petulance, arrogance, and scurrility of the Warburtonian school. See his Life, p. 21.

* Vestra solum legitis, vestra amatis: cæteros, causâ incognitâ, condemnatis. See the Cri. Rev. for April 1756. In the year 1759, Dr. Patten preached another sermon before the university, which he printed. In this the subject of his two former pieces is continued, and the argument carried on farther, and well supported

† In a Pamphlet published in 1760, entitled A View of Mr. Kennicott's Method of correcting the Hebrew Text, &c.

‡ After the revolution of 1789, this gentleman was made Bishop of Bologne by the king; but by

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Far be it from me to speak with disrespect of an undertaking which had the encouragement of so many great, so many good, and so many learned persons; who must be supposed to have acted with the best intention, in consequence of such reports as were laid before them; for many of them certainly had no judgment of their own upon the subject. But Mr. Horne, and some other readers of Hebrew, never approved of the design from the beginning; and Dr. Rutherforth, of Cambridge, a man of no small erudition, wrote professedly, and with some asperity, against it; or, at least, against the way in which he thought it would be executed. Some of the considerations they went upon were these following:

1. That the design was dangerous, and had a bad aspect. A new translation of the Bible into English had been strenuously recommended some years before by suspected persons with an ill intention.* That such persons, being not well affected to the church of England or its doctrines, would probably interfere with all their heart and interest, to turn the design to their own purposes. For it was evident by the intention of Dr. Kennicott at first, that there should be both a new Hebrew text, and a new English version; and I am rather of opinion, that Mr. Horne and his friends, by their remonstrances, however apparently unnoticed, might have some little share of merit in preventing it.

2. It hurt and alarmed them, to see a learned gentleman plead and argue, as if he had a victory to obtain by proving the corruption of the Hebrew text, and it were the game he was hunting after; for this did not look as if the glory of God was the object in view, but rather his own emolument as a collator—οπȣ το συμφερον, εκει το ευσεβες.

3. They were of opinion that the attempt was superfluous; because the exactness of the Masoretical Jews had guarded and secured the text of their Bible in such a manner, that no other book in the world had ever been so guarded and secured: that, therefore, there could not be room for any great alarm upon the subject.

4. That Cardinal Ximenes and his assistants, about two hnndred years before, had carefully collated the Hebrew text with manuscripts, older and better than were now to be met with in the world; and had exhibited a printed Hebrew text, as perfect as could be expected, or need be desired; because, by Mr. Kennicott's own confession, no such errors occurred in the text as affected any point of doctrine; the various readings being chiefly to be found in dates and numbers, which are of less importance and more uncertain notation. That, therefore, what Cardinal Ximenes had done in a better manner, and with greater advantages, would now be done with more difficulty, and probably to less effect.

5. They apprehended, that the dispute about the Hebrew text, the Samaritan Pentateuch, &c., had been sufficiently agitated and judiciously stated by Carpzov of Leipsic, in his writings against Whiston; so far at least as to show, that no great things were to be expected from any adventurer who should afterwards take the same ground. Carpzov's book was thought so useful and satisfactory, that Moses Marcus, a converted Jew, had translated it into English.

6. A consideration which had great weight with Mr. Horne, was that of the probable consequences of an undertaking so conducted as this was likely to be. Unbelievers, sceptics, and heretics, of this country, who had affected superior learning, had always been busy in finding imaginary corruptions in the text of Scripture: and would in future be more bold and busy than ever; as the work of confounding the text by unsound criticism would be carried on with the sanction of public authority, and the Bible left open to the experiments of evil-minded critics and cavillers. For besides the collating of manuscripts, the collator, in his dissertations, had opened three other fountains of criticism, by which the waters of the sanctuary were to be healed: the ancient versions, the Samaritan Pentateuch, and sound criticism. Having considered these in their order, Mr. Horne sets before his readers above twenty instances from Mr. Kennicott's own books, as a specimen of his manner of proceeding; to show "what an inundation of licentious criticism was breaking in upon the sacred text." These instances are such as fully justify his reflections; which the reader may find at p. 12, &c., of his View of Mr. Kennicott's Method, &c.

Such were the considerations on which Mr. Horne and his friends opposed Mr. Ken-

reason of the increasing troubles, he went to Brussels, and afterwards into Germany. He is universally spoken of as a person of great worth and learning.

* It appears from a Life of Dr. Sykes, p. 334, that the Socinians had great hopes from a new English version of the Bible, by which *all our present learned illustrations of the SS. were to be superseded*—all things were to become new—*the disciples were to become one fold*, and the *absolute unity of the peerless majesty of God was to be maintained by the whole community of Christians.* Socinianism alone was to introduce paradise and the millennium. The Socinians of Poland had a translation made, but it did not answer their purpose. See Mosheim's Hist. of Socinianism.

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nicott's undertaking; and, it is hoped, nothing has appeared to their disadvantage. In the progress of the controversy, some other considerations arose, which served to confirm them in the part they had taken. They observed that Mr. Kennicott changed his ground; first urging the necessity of a *new text* for the purpose of a new English version, and afterwards giving it up, without assigning his reasons. Another fact arose, which was palpably contrary to his own principles. When the design was to come forward, he had objected to the labors of Cardinal Ximenes, as being ineffective, because he admitted manuscripts furnished by Jews; but, when the work was to be carried on, he himself made Jews his agents to collect manuscripts for him in foreign parts, and admitted them, so far as we know, without reserve: and with this remarkable difference, that the Jews of the cardinal were turned Christians, whereas the Jews of Mr. Kennicott were still in their unbelief—except one; and he was of a character so extraordinary, that the reader cannot be displeased if I give some account of him; without which, so great a curiosity would, in all probability, be lost to the world. While the work of collation was going forward, it so happened, that Mr. Kennicott and his work, and Mr. Horne, and some of the friends to both, fell into difficulty and danger, from a man whose name was Dumay; a person who, having been encouraged upon benevolent motives in the beginning, proved in the issue to be not much better than the Dumas who had been attended in the Castle at Oxford; and of whom it *is* still uncertain whether he did not come to the same untimely end. It was my fortune to be the first person in the University of Oxford that took notice of him, and the last that received any intelligence about him after he left this country; and it is doubtful to me whether any body is better acquainted with his character and history than myself. He was a French Jew, born upon the borders of Lorrain, and had received such an education as enabled him to understand Hebrew, and to write it with consummate excellencc. He could turn his hand to drawing, and any other work of art; he had the ingratiating address of a Frenchman, with an appearance of sincerity; but with the unprincipled mind of a Jew; so that there was no depending upon him. Before he was twenty years of age, he appeared at Oxford as a petty Jew-merchant, whose whole stock consisted of a few seals, pencils, and other trinkets. His civility drew my attention, and I took him to my chambers, to inquire what he had learned. I soon found his qualifications considerable, and, for his excellence in writing Hebrew, set him to work, with design to preserve his performances as curiosities; and I have several of them by me at this time. His ingenuity soon procured him more friends, of whom Mr. Horne was one of the most considerable; by means of which he gained a moderate livelihood; and some pains were taken with him occasionally, with the hope of bringing over a person of so much Jewish knowledge to some sense of Christianity. After he had led this sort of life for some time, he returned to visit his relations in France; having first prevailed on me to write him a testimonial of his late behavior, to procure him a favorable reception; from which it seems probable, that he had left his friends in consequence of some misdemeanor. While he was abroad he turned Christian, and received baptism from a priest of the church of Rome, under the name of Ignatius. Then he went into the army of the King of France; promoted desertion among his comrades, quarrelled with his officer, and ran him through the body, but without killing him. Just at this juncture, the army in which he served came to an engagement with Prince Ferdinand, and he was taken prisoner. But the prince having heard something of his history, and understanding it would be certain destruction to him if he were sent back to his own party, gave him a passport to England, with a recommendation to Mr. De Reiche, the Hanoverian Secretary at St. James's; a very worthy friendly gentleman, who had been a considerable benefactor to Dumay, till he found him at length a dead weight upon his hands, and grew tired of him. In the year 1761, after the famous transit of Venus, he presented himself to Mr. Horne at Magdalen College with terribly sore eyes; and being asked what was the matter, he answered, that he had suffered in his eye-sight by looking at the sun; for having omitted to furnish himself as other people did for the occasion, he had made all his observations through a crack in his fingers, and had nearly put his eyes out. I do not recollect at what time he entered into his employment under Mr. Kennicott, who certainly found him very well qualified for his purpose in point of ability and industry, but high-spirited, turbulent, and discontented; so that, after he had been a year or two at the work of collating Hebrew manuscripts, he quarrelled with his employer, threw himself out of his work, and came with his complaints to me in the country, desiring to show me some extracts he had made from the collations, that I might be a witness with him to the futility of the undertaking. The specimen he produced was not to the advantage of it; but it was not easy to

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judge how far the fidelity of a person in an ill-humor was to be depended upon. None but the collator himself could determine with precision. I advised him by all means to return to Mr. Kennicott, make his peace with him, and go on quietly with his business. Which he did; but after a perfidious manner; playing a false game between two parties; and carrying stories from the one to the other as it suited his purpose, till all his friends found reason to be afraid of him, and Mr. Kennicott (now Dr. Kennicott) was under the necessity of dismissing him. So he left the occupation of a collator, formed a plan for forging Hebrew manuscripts, with all the appearances of antiquity, and putting them off for genuine, to show how the world might be imposed upon. Somebody, in compassion to his distress, recommended him as an assistant to a charitable gentleman at a school in Bedfordshire, for which employment he was well qualified; but there also, after he had given much trouble, he miscarried. At length he got into some place of trust, which gave him an opportunity of making off with a sum of money: for, with all his ingenuity and industry, and without any one expensive vice, yet, as if some demon had pursued him, he so ordered his affairs, that, having now a wife and child to maintain, he was very seldom far from beggary; whence one would hope he did some things rather from distress than malignity; though it must be owned, that upon the plea of his own wants, he could justify himself to his own conscience in any act of perfidy against the best of his benefactors; his conduct being exactly the same to his friends and his enemies, if his affairs required it. With what he had thus got, he went over to Paris; where, by means of his own Hebrew papers, and some others which he had carried away with him, he had the address to introduce himself to a society of Hebrew scholars among the Capuchin friars of St. Honoré; and amongst them all they fabricated a work, in the French language, which came over into England under the title of *Lettres de M. l'Abbé de**** Ex-professeur en Hebreu en l'Université de***, au Sr. Kennicott Anglois*. It has Rome in the title, as if it had been there printed, but it was sold at Paris; and its date is 1771. This pamphlet is severe, both in its reflections and its examples, on the work of collation, so celebrated in England, that people would hear nothing against it; and I was told, that the bookseller who traded in foreign books refused to take this into his shop: and yet some of its assertions are but to the same effect with those of Mr. Horne in his view; the substance of which the reader may see from the quotation in the margin.* This piece was afterwards translated into English by a worthy gentleman, who was struck by its facts and arguments; and a small anonymous pamphlet was published soon after its appearance, apologizing for the silence of Dr. Kennicott, and alleging that he had *no time to answer it*.

While I was at Paris, I inquired of Mr. Asseline, the Hebrew professor at the Sorbonne, whether he had ever seen such a person as I described Dumay to be? He answered that he had seen him, but that he was gone off from Paris, and he supposed nobody knew what was become of him. When I inquired farther, who had been his friends, he confessed that the Capuchins of St. Honoré were suspected to have been the compilers and editors of his book. Now the reader has heard my story, let him consider, whether he can recollect a more extraordinary character than that of this Jew, Christian, Papist, Protestant, soldier, scrivener, French, Englishman! If it so happened that he survived his *fourberies*, he may have proved to be a serviceable hand, and have acted some useful part upon the stage of the French revolution.†

Neither Mr. Horne nor his friends could ever be persuaded, that, under the present state of the printed Hebrew text, the labors of an Hebrew collator were at this time wanted by the Christian world; or that the experiment, from the face with which it made its appearance, would not be attended with some danger: and it might be owing (as I have said) to their pressing remonstrances, that the plan of a new text, and a new English translation, was laid aside. How far they were right in apprehending evil from it to the Christian cause, doth not appear from any consequences which have yet followed, and we hope it never will. The edi-

* Il ne restera pas un seul mot dans la Bible Hebraïque dont on puisse garantir la sincérité. Sentez donc les suites de votre entreprise: il n'en résultera qu'un ouvrage mal conçu, peu conforme aux regles de la saine critique, totalement inutile, et plus propre à éblouir par un vain etalage de prétendues corrections, qu'à instruire par des raisonnemens solides. P. 12.

† This man is frequently spoken of in Dr. Horne's Letters; from one of which, of March 1770, I take what follows: "The Sieur Dumay is a curious rogue indeed! The subject is so pregnant, that I could with pleasure put out my candles, to pass the evening in meditation upon him and his proceedings, since we had first the honor of knowing him, when he talked so much of Titus and the copper fly. If the best men are most imposed upon (as some say they are,) we may, I think, without vanity, esteem ourselves to be a tolerably good sort of people." N.B. The Jews have a foolish legend, that when Titus had destroyed Jerusalem, God Almighty, to be revenged on the enemy of his people, sent a copper fly for his punishment, which crept up his nose, and fed upon his brain, till it had killed him.

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tion makes a very fine book, which will do honor to the memory of the editor, and, with its various readings, may be a very innocent one, if used with discretion. My learned and worthy friend, the late Rev. Mr. Parkhurst, (the last edition of whose Hebrew lexicon was patronized by Dr. Horne after he was made a bishop) speaks of it with due respect: his words are these—"The principal *various readings* in Dr. Kennicott's Hebrew Bible have been carefully noted, and are submitted to the reader's consideration and judgment. And it is hoped that the use which is here made of that elaborate work cannot fail of being acceptable to every serious and intelligent inquirer into the sense of the Hebrew Scriptures." See the advertisement to the third edition.

Of the friendly way in which Dr. Kennicott and Dr. Horne lived together, forgetting all their former disputes, yet without changing their opinions on either side, so far as I have been able to discover, I have already spoken; but the cause of learning and religion is still, and ever will be, so deeply concerned in the argument between them, that it well deserves to be remembered and understood; and for this reason only I have spent so many words upon it. I may therefore hope to be pardoned, if I still go on to do as much justice as I can to Dr. Horne's side of the question, by adding one weighty reason which he had (though he did not say much about it) for his suspicions in regard to the good effect of the collating system.* He thought it would be of disservice to turn the minds of the learned more toward the letter of the Bible, when they were already too much turned away from the spirit of it. The best fruits of divine wisdom may be gathered from the word of God, in any language, and in any edition. To what the Scripture itself calls the spirit of the Scripture, the learned of late days were become much more inattentive than in past ages. The puritans of the last century set a proper value upon it, and some of them did well in displaying it; but when their formal manners, with their long prayers, and their long graces, were rejected, their interpretations of the Scripture, and with them all sounder interpretations of the kind, fell into disrepute; for men are such hasty reformers, that if they cast out evil, they cast out some good along with it. When tares are plucked up, the wheat is always in danger.

To this cause another may be added. The persons, who since that time have risen into chief repute for parts and learning, had nothing of this in their compositions; such as Clarke, Hoadley, Hare, Middleton, Warburton, Sherlock, South, William Law, Edmund Law, and many others who have flourished since the restoration; they either did not know it, or did not relish it, and fell totally into other ways of studying and reasoning: after which it was naturally to be expected in their disciples, that the spirit of the Scripture should be less regarded. This actually did happen, and to such a degree, that many did not even know what was meant by it. Somebody was wanting to revive the knowledge that was lost: but, alas! when this was attempted, the door was shut. This sort of learning, the best and the greatest of which the mind of man is capable in this life, had been so long asleep, that it seemed likely never more to awake. Accordingly, when Mr. Horne sat down to write his Commentary on the Psalms, which proceeds throughout upon the true principle, he was under great anxiety of mind about the reception of it by the world; and expressed his fears in the preface to the work, telling his readers "he is not insensible that many learned and good men, whom he does not therefore value and respect the less, have conceived strong prejudices against the scheme of interpretation here pursued; and he knows how little the generality of modern Christians are accustomed to speculations of this kind. In the first age of the church, when the apostolical method of citing and expounding was fresh upon the minds of their followers, the author cannot but be confident, that his Commentary, if it had then made its appearance, would have been universally received and approved as to the general design of it, by the whole Christian world," &c. &c. How unfortunate it is that such strong prejudices should be conceived against that mode of interpretation, in which Christians differ from Jews! But so it is; and so long as it is the custom for learned men to employ their time and talents, as the Masorites did, and more reputation is to be obtained by picking and sifting of letters, than by the apostolical method of opening the sense and spirit of them, the evil will be rather increasing than diminishing. When fashion invites, vanity will always follow; critic will succeed to critic, and he that is the boldest will think himself the greatest, till all due veneration for the Bible is lost, and the text is cut and slashed, as if it were no longer a living body, but the subject of a lecture in Surgeons' Hall. While the rage of editing prevails, and the state of the copy is the grand object,

* In Bishop Hurd's late Life of Dr. Warburton, Dr. Lowth is reflected upon for his expectations from the labors of Dr. Kennicott.

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we have then too much reason to apprehend, that the spirit of life, which is still to be found, even in the worst copies and poorest editions, will be less regarded and understood. We should have but a mean opinion of the gardener, who should always be clearing and raking his borders, but never raising anything from them to support the life of man. Thus, if collating ends in collation, the tendency of it may be bad, though it be ever so well executed: and I believe this was, at the bottom of the chief objection against it in the mind of Mr. Horne. He was shy of speaking too plain, through a fear of giving offence; but the time has now many greater dangers than that of offending some few modern critics and editors.

I relate it as a singular occurrence, that when the mind of Mr. Horne was first filled with the design of commenting upon the Psalms, he should meet with a traveller in a stage-coach, who was in principle the very reverse of himself. The man gave his judgment with all freedom on all subjects of divinity, and among the rest on the use of the Psalms in the service of the church. The Psalms of David, he said, were nothing to us, and he thought other compositions might be substituted, which were much more to the purpose than David's Psalms. He happened to be speaking to a person, who could see deeper than most men into the ignorance and folly of his discourse, but was wise enough to hear him with patience, and leave him to proceed in his own way. Yet this poor man was but the pattern of too many more, who want to be taught again, that David was a Prophet, and speaks of the Messiah where he seems to be speaking of himself; as the apostle St. Peter taught the Jews, in the second chapter of the Acts, and thereby converted three thousand of them at once to the belief of Christ's resurrection.

There is another modern way of criticising upon the Scripture, to which Mr. Horne had no great affection, as thinking it could never be of much service: I mean that custom, which has prevailed since the days of Grotius, of justifying and illustrating the things revealed to us in the Scripture from *heathen* authorities. I had seen too much of this among some of my acquaintance, persons of no mean learning, but who, instead of employing themselves in the more successful labor of comparing spiritual things with spiritual, in order to understand them, were diligent in collecting parallel passages from Heathen authors, to compare them with the Scripture; as if the sun wanted the assistance of a candle; or the word of God was not worthy to be received, but so far only as we are able to reconcile it with the wisdom of Greek and Roman authors. He was rather of opinion, with a certain writer, that the Bible will explain all the books in the world, but wants not them to explain it. St. Paul did not think it improper, an certain occasions, to refer to Heathen authorities,* and make his use of them for the confirmation of his own doctrine; but this was done when he was arguing with Heathens, not with Christians. There is not the same propriety, when his sublime chapter on the resurrection is compared (as I have seen it) with Plato's doctrine of generation and corruption. Take the Heathen doctrine of the origination of mankind, and compare it with the sacred history of Adam in Paradise, and it will soon appear how little the one wants the help of the other:

Quum prorepserunt primis animalia terris
Brutum et turpe pecus, glandem atque cubilia propter
Unguibus et pugnis, dein fustibus, atque ita porro
Pugnabant armis, quæ post fabricaverat usus:
Donec verba, quibus voces sensusque notarent,
Nominaque invenere— Hor.

It was a doctrine of the Heathen poets that men, when first made, were *without speech*, creeping on all four like beasts, living upon acorns, and lodging like swine in a forest: whereas, when we consult the Bible, we find the first man conversing with his Maker, placed under a state of instruction and probation, and in a condition but little lower than an angel. What must the consequence be, when an attempt is made to reconcile these two accounts, and melt them down together? Yet was this actually done by the learned Dr. Shuckford, as it may be seen in the last written Preface to his Connection; where the history of Adam, and of Eve, and of Paradise, and the intercourse of man with his Creator, is commented upon and illustrated from Ovid, and Tully, and Mr. Pope's poetical system of deism, called *an Essay on Man;* till the whole is involved in obscurity, and becomes even childish and insignificant; as if it had been the design of the critic to expose the sacred history to the contempt of blasphemers and infidels. This abuse of learning Mr. Horne could not see without a mixture of grief and indignation: he is therefore supposed to be the person who, in a little anonymous pamphlet, made his remarks on this unworthy manner of handling the Scripture. While he was young, his zeal was ardent, and his strictures were unreserved. Yet I can never persuade myself, that it was the intention of Dr. Shuckford to put a slight upon the Bible; though he cer-

* See Acts, xvii. 23. 28.

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tainly has made the Mosaic account as ridiculous in simplicity, as Dr. Middleton did in malice. I rather think he was betrayed into the mistake by a prevailing custom of the age. When the learned are less studious of the Scripture, and become vain of other learning, it may easily be foreseen how the Scripture must suffer under their expositions; and, if they do not foresee it, we would refer them for evidence to the Supplemental Discourse on the Creation and Fall of Man, by Dr. Shuckford. The reformer who dares to censure a corrupt practice, can never be well received by the parties who are in fault. This was the lot of Mr. Horne and his friends. The candle which they had lighted at the Scripture, and held up to show some dangers and absurdities in modern learning, was blown out, and they themselves were accused as persons of great zeal and little understanding. How often do we see that when men *should* be reformed, and are *not*, they are only provoked past remedy! This being, upon the whole, but an unpleasant subject, I shall proceed to one that will entertain us better.

A letter of July the 25th, 1755, informed me that Mr. Horne, according to an established custom at Magdalen College, in Oxford, had begun to preach before the university, on the day of St. John the Baptist. For the preaching of this annual sermon a permanent pulpit of stone is inserted into a corner of the first quadrangle; and, so long as the stone pulpit was in use (of which I have been a witness) the quadrangle was furnished round the sides with a large fence of green boughs, that the preaching might more nearly resemble that of John the Baptist in the wilderness; and a pleasant sight it was: but for many years the custom hath been discontinued, and the assembly have thought it safer to take shelter under the roof of the chapel. Our forefathers, it seems, were not so much afraid of being injured by the falling of a little rain, or the blowing of the wind, or the shining of the sun upon their heads. The preacher of 1755 pleased the audience very much by his manner and style, and all agreed that he had a *very fine imagination;* but he was not very well pleased with the compliment. As a *Christian teacher*, he was much more desirous that his hearers should receive, and understand, and enter into the spirit of the doctrines he had delivered; but in this he found them slower than he wished, and laments it heavily in a private letter. Two sermons on the subject of St. John the Baptist were printed, and many others succeeded which were not printed: for the author, at last, on a review of what he had done, thought it more advisable to throw the matter out of that form, and cast an abridgment of the whole into the form of *Considerations;* on which performance I have already spoken my mind, and, I believe, the mind of every competent judge, in the beginning of this work. (See Pref. Epist.) I can only say here, that if there be any Christian reader who wishes to know what a saint is, and aspires to be one himself, let him keep before his eyes that beautiful and finished picture of St. John the Baptist, to the executing of which but one person of the age was equal. But behold how this was described by the *Critical Reviewers* of the time! "In the Considerations," they say, "there are some judicious and solid remarks relative to practice, but *nothing to engage the attention of a curious, inquisitive, or critical reader.*" They might have said the same of the Sermon on the Mount. It looks as if they would have been better pleased with a dissertation upon the manner in which the wild honey was made and collected for John to eat,* properly interspersed with quotations from Athenæus and other authors, to show the learning of the writer, and that, perhaps, but impertinently introduced. When there is a party always ready, and always upon the watch to hinder the success of every good

* Many examples might be given, to illustrate the distinction between *Christian* divinity, by which men are edified, and *curious* divinity, by which they are only amused and entertained. We read in the Gospel, Luke, xix. 4. that Zaccheus climbed up into a sycamore tree, to see Jesus pass by, and was led by that circumstance to repentance and salvation. When this case is considered by the *Christian divine*, he dwells upon the circumstance of Zaccheus's desiring to see the Saviour of the world, and the inestimable blessing of being called by him, as Zaccheus was, to a state of salvation. But when the *curious divine* hears that Zaccheus climbs up into a tree, he climbs up after him; not to see what he saw, but to examine the nature of the tree, and ascertain to what species of plants, botanically considered, it properly belongs.

In this example we have two very different modes of treating the Scripture. No man that loves learning will condemn the critical disquisitor: let him pursue his inquiries; there is no harm in them: but when he presumes, as from an upper region, to disdain the Christian divine as unworthy of all commendation, he pays too great a compliment to his own importance, and raises a very just suspicion against his own religious principles. The case of Zaccheus is considered in the *Christian way* by Bishop Hall, (see Mr. Glasse's edition, vol. iii. p. 219,) and matter enough for the *critical way* may be found in the Voyages of Frederic Hasselquist, p. 129, et alib. The same *inquisitive* person was, as he tells us, very solicitious to discover what *kind of tree in particular* David had his eye upon in the first Psalm: which never can be discovered, if his expressions, as they seem, have an allusion to the Tree of Life. See our author's Commentary on the first Psalm; who inclines to this opinion.

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attempt, and mislead the ignorant on subjects of the first importance, such a writer as the author of those Considerations had little chance of escaping. Their artifices had been so well observed and understood by him, that he was able to predict their proceedings. When I had printed a discourse on the Mosaic distinction of animals in the book of Leviticus, which had cost me much research and meditation, under the title of Zoologia Ethica, in which I had traced the *moral intention* of that curious institution, he foretold me how it would be represented to the public; that the critics would select some part of the work, which was either ambiguous in itself, or might be made so by their manner of exhibiting it, and give that as a specimen of the plan, to discourage the examination of it. "The passage," said he, "at page 19, &c., about the camel and the swine will probably be selected by the reviewers, given to the reader without a syllable of the evidence, and then the whole book dismissed with a sneer." In a few months after, his prediction was so exactly verified, that one would have suspected him to have been in the secret. "If you look into the Critical Review, you will be tempted to think I wrote the article on the Zoologia, to verify my own prediction. Without giving the least account of your plan, and the arguments by which it is so irrefragably supported and demonstrated, the ———— give the very passage about the swine and the camel, and conclude the whole scheme to be visionary and *problematical*, as they phrase it."* Thus is a malignant party gratified, and the public is beguiled by false accounts: the deception may continue for a time; but truth and justice generally take place at last.

There is a portion of the New Testament, very interesting and full of matter, on which the author of the Considerations, soon after he was in holy orders, bestowed much thought and labor. I mean the eleventh chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews. On this he composed at least twenty sermons, which are all excellent; but being more agreeable to the spirit of the first ages than of the present, he was not forward, though frequently solicited, to give them to the world. He objected, that they wanted to be reviewed with a more critical eye, and even to be recomposed; and that this would be a work of time. Toward the latter end of his life, however, he set about it, but got no farther than through the third discourse. The first is on the Character of Abel, the second on Enoch, the third on Noah. Of these I have the copy, and hope it will be published. Whoever looks at them, will wish he had lived to satisfy his mind about all the rest. They would certainly have been improved by such a revision; yet, perhaps, not so much as he supposed. First thoughts, upon a favorite subject, are warm and lively; and the language they bring with them is strong and natural; but prudence is apt to be cold and timorous; and, while it adds a polish, takes away something from the spirit of the composition.

But the greatest work of his life, of which he now began to form the design, was a *Commentary on the whole Book of Psalms*. In the year 1758, he told me how he had been meditating on the Book of Psalms, and had finished those for the first day of the month, upon the following plan:* 1. An analysis of the Psalm, by way of argument. 2. A paraphrase on each verse. 3. The substance digested into a prayer. "The work," said he, "delights me greatly, and seems, so far as I can judge of my own turn and talents, to suit me the best of any I can think of. May he, who hath the *keys of David*, prosper it in my hand; granting me the knowledge and utterance necessary to make it serviceable to the church!" Let any person of judgment peruse the work, and he will see how well the author has succeeded, and kept up the spirit of it to the end. His application of the book of Psalms is agreeable to the testimony so repeatedly given to it, and the use made of it, in the New Testament. This question is stated and settled beyond a doubt, in a learned preface to the work. The style is that of an accomplished writer; and its ornaments distinguish the vigor of his imagination. That all readers should admire it as I do, is not to be expected; yet it has certainly met with great admiration; and I have seen letters to him, from persons of the first judgment, on the publication of the book. It will never be neglected, if the church and its religion should continue; for which he prayed fervently every day of his life. When it first came from the press, Mr. Daniel Prince, his bookseller at Oxford, was walking to or from Magdalen College with a copy of it under his arm. "What have you there, Mr. Prince?" said a gentleman who met him. "This, sir, is a copy of Dr. Horne's Psalms, just now finished. The President, sir, began

* The date of the letter from which this extract is taken is Feb. 12, 1772. The work, thus unfairly treated, I sent to the learned Bishop Newton, a writer of profound skill in the language of the Scripture; who allowed that I had proved the *moral intention* of that law which is the subject of it.

* This plan he afterwards thought proper to alter, and, as it is judged, for the better.

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to write *very young*: but this is the work in which he will always live." In this Mr. Prince judged very rightly: he will certainly live in this work; but there are many others of his works, in which he will not die, till all learning and piety shall die with him.

His Commentary on the Psalms was under his hand about twenty years. The labor to which he submitted in the course of the work, was prodigious; his reading for many years was allotted chiefly to this subject; and his study and meditation together produced as fine a work, and as finely written, as most in the English language. There are good and learned men who cannot but speak well of the work, and yet are forward to let us know that they do not follow Dr. Horne as an interpreter. I believe them; but this is one of the things we have to lament: and, while they may think this an honor to their judgment, I am afraid it is a symptom that we are retrograde in theological learning. The author was sensible that, after the pleasure he had received in studying for the work, and the labor of composing and correcting, he was to offer what the age was ill prepared to receive. This put him upon his guard; and the work is in some respects the better for it, in others not so good; it is more cautiously and correctly written, but perhaps not so richly furnished with matter as it might have been. Had he been composing a novel, he would have been under none of these fears: his imagination might then have taken its course without a bridle, and the world would have followed as fast as he could wish.

The first edition in quarto was published in the year 1776, when the author was vice-chancellor; and it happened, soon after its publication, that I was at Paris. There was then a Christian University in the place! and I had an opportunity of recommending it to some learned gentlemen who were members of it, and understood the English language well. I took the liberty to tell them, our church had lately been enriched by a Commentary on the Psalms, the best, in our opinion, that had ever appeared, and such as St. Austin would have perused with delight, if he had lived to see it. At my return the author was so obliging as to furnish me with a copy to send over to them as a present; and I was highly gratified by the approbation with which it was received. With those who could read English, it was so much in request, that I was told the book was never out of hand; and I apprehend more copies were sent for. Every intelligent Christian who once knows the value of it, will keep it, to the end of his life, as the companion of his retirement; and I can scarcely wish a greater blessing to the age, than that it may daily be better known and more approved.

About the time when it was published, that systematical infidel, David Hume, died. It had been the aim of his life, to invent a sort of philosophy that should effect the overthrow of Christianity. For this he lived; and his ambition was to die, or be thought to die, hard and impenitent, yea, and even cheerful and happy, to show the world the power of his own principles; which, however, were weakly founded, and so inconsistent with common sense, that Dr. Beattie attacked and demolished them in the life-time of the author. Special pains were taken by Hume himself, and by his friends after him, to persuade the world that his life, at the last stage of it, was perfectly tranquil and composed; and the part is so labored and over-acted, that there is just cause of suspicion, even before the detection appears. Dr. Horne, whose mind was ever in action for some good end, could not sit still and see the public so imposed upon. He addressed an anonymous *Letter to Dr. Adam Smith* from the Clarendon press; of which the argument is so clear, and the humor so easy and natural, that no honest man can keep his countenance while he reads it, and none but an infidel can be angry. While Dr. Adam Smith affects to be very serious and solemn in the cause of his friend Hume, the author of the Letter plays them both off with wonderful effect. He alludes to certain anecdotes concerning Mr. Hume, which are very inconsistent with the account given in his Life; for at the very period, when he is reported not to have *suffered a moment's abatement of his spirits*, none of his friends dared to mention the name of a certain *author* in his presence, lest it should *throw him into a transport of passion and swearing*: a certain indication that his mind had been greatly hurt; and nobody will think it was without reason, if he will read the Essay on Truth by Dr. Beattie; which is not only a confutation of Hume's philosophy; it is much more; it is an extirpation of his principles, and delivers them to be scattered like stubble by the winds.

The Letter to Dr. Adam Smith, like the Essay of Dr. Beattie, has a great deal of truth, recommended by a great deal of wit; and if the reader has not seen it, he has some pleasure in store. We allow to the memory of Dr. Adam Smith, that he was a person of quick understanding and diligent research, in things relating merely to this world; of which, his Inquiry into the Causes of the Wealth of Nations will be a lasting monument; and it is a work of great use to those

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who would obtain a comprehensive view of business and commerce: but when he set up Mr. Hume as a pattern of perfection, and judged of all religion by the principles of that philosopher, he was very much out of his line.

The Letter was followed in course of time by *Letters on Infidelity;* which are very instructive and entertaining, and highly proper for the preventing or lessening that respect which young people may conceive unawares for unbelieving philosophers. It has been objected by some readers of a more severe temper, that these Letters are occasionally too light:* and I must confess I should have been as well pleased if the story of Dr. Radcliffe and his man had been omitted; but there is this to be said, that these are not sermons, but familiar letters; that Dr. Horne considered the profession of infidelity as a thing more ridiculous and insignificant in itself than some of his learned readers might do; that, as it appeared in some persons, it was really too absurd to be treated with seriousness; and, as Voltaire had treated religion with ridicule instead of argument, and had done infinite mischief by it, justice required that he and his friends should be treated a little in their own way.† Besides, as infidels have nothing to support them but their vanity, let them once appear as ridiculous as they are impious, and they cannot live. They can never approve themselves, but so far only as they are upheld and approved by other people. To treat them with seriousness (as Watson has treated Gibbon) is to make them important; which is all they want. The opinions of Mr. Hume, as they are displayed in these Letters, are many of them ridiculous from their palpable absurdity: but, it must be owned, they are sometimes horrible and shocking; such as, that man is not an accountable but a necessary agent; consequently that there is no such thing as sin, or that God is the author of it: that the life of a man and the life of an oyster are of *equal* value:‡ that it may be as criminal to act for the preservation of life, as for its destruction: that as life is so insignificant and vague, there can be no harm in disposing of it as we please: that there can be no more crime in turning a few ounces of blood out of their course (that is, in cutting one's throat,) than in turning the waters of a river out of their channel. What is murder? it is nothing more than turning a little blood out of its way. And so the Irishman said, by the same figure of rhetoric, that perjury was nothing more than kissing a book, or, as he worded it, smacking the calveskin. This is the sage Mr. Hume! whom Dr. Adam Smith delivers to the world, after his death, as a perfect character; while a man of plain sense, who takes things as they are, would think it impossible that any person, who is not out of his mind, should argue at this rate. Mr. Hume seems to me to have borrowed from the school of the old Pyrrhonists much of that system which he is supposed to have invented. They made all things indifferent, and doubted of everything, that there might be nothing true or real left to disturb them. The chief good they aimed at in everything, was what they called ἀταραξία a state of undisturbance or tranquillity, in which the mind cares for nothing; and it was the ambition of Mr. Hume to be thought to have lived and died in this state; but by all accounts his ἀταραξία was not quite perfect.*

* In his preface to these Letters, the author has endeavored to obviate this objection; and we think he has done it very sufficiently.

† One of the severest reflections that ever came from the pen of Dr. Horne, was aimed, as I suppose, at this Mr. David Hume; yet it is all very fair. This philosopher had observed, that all the *devout* persons he had ever met with were *melancholy;* which is thus answered: "This might very probably be; for, in the first place, it is most likely, that he saw very few, his friends and acquaintance being of another sort; and, secondly, the sight of *him* would make a devout person melancholy at any time." These Letters are a demonstration that all devout persons are not melancholy.

‡ It is a fundamental doctrine in the creed of *materialism*, that nature consists of *matter* and a *living substance* of which all living creatures *equally* partake; and which, when it dies in a carcase, is continued in the reptiles that feed upon it. The origin of individual life, in every form, is from the general animation of the world; on which the philosophers of antiquity speculated; and some inconsiderate Christians have taken it up on their authority. You have it in Virgil:

Principio cœlum, ac terras, camposque liquentes,
Lucentemque globum Lunæ, Titaniaque astra
SPIRITUS intus alit: totamque infusa per artus
MENS agitat molem, et magno se corpore miscet.
INDE hominum pecudumque genus, VITÆQUE volantum.

And in Mr. Pope's Essay on Man:

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul, &c.
Ep. i. 267, &c.

What follows is in exact conformity with the principle of Virgil, and of our philosophical deists.

* Pliny the natural historian has rightly observed, that philosophers, through the affectation of apathy, divested themselves of all human affections; that this was the case with Diogenes the cynic, Pyrrho, Heraclitus, and Timon of Athens; the last of whom actually sunk into a professed hatred of all mankind. "Exit hic animi tenor aliquando in rigorem quemdam, torvitatemque naturæ duram et inflexibilem; adfectusque humanos adimit, quales *apathes*, Græci vocant, multos ejus generis experti." Nat. Hist. lib. vii. c. 19.

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His object was undoubtedly the same with that of the Pyrrhonists, and he pursues it by a like way of reasoning. The speculations of these men were so copious, that there is matter enough left for another Mr. Hume to set himself up with, and pass for an original. Of all the sects of antiquity this was the most unreasonable; though pretending to more wisdom than all the rest. That which was but folly under Heathenism, turns into desperation and madness under the light and truth of Christianity. Where all was blind tradition, or wild conjecture, there might be some excuse for fixing to nothing; but to affect *undisturbance*, after what is now revealed, concerning death and judgment, and heaven and hell, is to try how far a man can argue himself out of his senses. What angels may think of such a person, I do not inquire; but how must evil spirits look upon that man who sleeps or laughs over the things at which they tremble, and then calls himself a *Philosopher!*

Of the Letters on Infidelity, the first half is employed on Mr. David Hume; the latter half on a more modern adventurer, who, to be revenged on the bishops of this church, put together a miscellany of objections against the Scripture and the Christian religion. The right reverend bench had procured an act of parliament against the Sunday-clubs, which met together on the evening of the Sabbath-day, to indulge themselves, and corrupt an audience, with blasphemous disquisitions and disputations. For thus cruelly disturbing the amusements of infidelity, the bishops are represented as the vilest of persecutors: whips, tortures, racks, and all the implements of the holy office are introduced to confirm the accusation; from all which a stranger to the case might suppose it a common thing with the prelates of this country, to break the bones of infidels, or roast them alive; and all this is for nothing else, but that they had seasonably and wisely provided, that the Christian religion, in a Christian country, should not be trampled under foot upon the Sabbath-day.

The objections this man hath brought together are very well taken off; but if Christians are bound to answer, so long as infidels will object, who never wish to be satisfied, and are probably incapable of being so, their lot would be rather hard, and much of their time unprofitably spent. The gentlemen of the long robe attend the court, not to answer the scruples which felons may entertain about the principles of justice, but to administer the law; otherwise their work would never be done; and it is the business of the clergy to preach the Gospel to the people: it was the part of God, who gave the word, to prove it to the world by prophecies and miracles. The prophecies are as strong as ever; some of them more so than formerly: and miracles are not to be repeated for proof, after the world hath once been persuaded. All is then left to testimony and education. Before Moses gave the law, he showed signs and wonders; but, when the law was once received, parents were to tell their children, and confirm the truth by the memorials that were left of it. It therefore lies upon our adversaries to show how it came to pass, on any of *their* principles, that men like themselves, as much disposed to make objections, should receive the Scripture as the word of God in the several nations of the world, and receive it at the peril of their lives; a fact which they cannot deny. Let them also try to account for it, on their own principles, how the Jews have been strolling about the world for seventeen hundred years, as witnesses to the Scripture, and to the sentence therein passed upon themselves. Till they can do these things, it is nothing but an evasion to cavil about words and passages; a certain mark of prejudice and perverseness. They know they cannot deny the whole; but, as they must appear to be doing something, they flatter their own pride by keeping up a skirmish, and perplex weak people, by raising difficulties about the parts. This was the expedient on which Mr. Voltaire bestowed so much labor. It does not appear to me that he really thought the facts of Christianity to be false; but that his vanity and perverseness tempted him to ridicule the Bible, without denying in his mind that God was the author of it; in fact, that he was a *Theomachist*, who hated the truth, knowing it to be such, and braved the authority of Heaven itself: or, in the words of Herbert, that he was a man,

> Who makes flat war with God, and doth defy
> With his poor clod of earth the spacious sky.

If a religion, to which the nature of man is so hostile, did actually make its way without force, and against the utmost cruelty and discouragement from the world; *that* fact was a miracle, including within itself a thousand other miracles.

See, on the other hand, how Paganism, Mahometism, and modern atheism, were and are supported and propagated: the Pagan idols by ten bloody persecutions, with every act of outrageous mockery and insult, for want of reasons and miracles: the religion of Mahomet (a sort of Christian heresy) by rewards of sensuality and the power of the sword; that is, by force and temptation: the

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atheism of France by farcical representation and ridicule of truth, assisted in the rear by imprisonments, murders, and confiscations. These be thy gods, O infidelity, by the power of which thy kingdom is established in the world! These efforts of violence show the weakness of false reason, and the strength of that which is true; and demonstrate, that men were prevailed upon by true evidence, and rational persuasion, to receive the Christian faith. Here lie the merits of the cause in a small compass; and let all the infidels upon earth lay their heads together, and give a direct answer. Swift assures us, from his own observations, and, I believe, very truly, that a man was "always vicious before he became an unbeliever;" and that "reasoning will never make a man correct an opinion, which by reasoning he never acquired." Some service, however, is done to the cause of piety, and defensive weapons are put into the hands of those whose minds are as yet uncorrupted, when the malice or ignorance of an infidel is exposed by an examination of his objections: the corruption of *his* mind is thereby displayed in such a manner, that even a child may see it; and therefore we are much obliged to Dr. Horne for answering the doubts of infidels, and for seasoning his answer with such wit and spirit, that the work, in some parts of it, has the force of a comedy: it should therefore be put into the hands of young people, that they may see how foolish some men are when they pretend to be overwise. The Letter to Dr. Priestley from an Undergraduate, that to Dr. Adam Smith on the Character of David Hume, and the Letters on Infidelity, are three choice pieces upon the same argument, which should always go together. But suppose infidelity is answered, the business is not all done: we have still the *believing unbeliever* to contend with, of whom there is but little hope. The Christian evidence can certainly have no effect on those that deny it: but that it should have so little effect on some that believe it, and even argue and dispute well for it, this is the greatest wonder of all; but so the matter stands. There is a sort of people amongst us, who believe Christianity as a *fact*, while they deny it as a *truth*: and such persons may do more harm, and be themselves as far from the kingdom of heaven, as the open unbeliever: the Gospel assures us that he and the hypocrite will have their portion together. Priestley asserts the *facts* of Christianity against the philosophers of France, while he believes no more of its *truth* than the Sadduces of Jerusalem did, who yet never denied that God had spoken unto Moses. That men professing Christianity should be under temptations to vice, we can easily understand; but that their minds should believe and deny, at the same time, concerning the same thing, *there* is the difficulty. May it be said, that the mind has antecedently admitted a principle which militates against the *truth*, while it does not militate against the *fact*? God knows how the matter is; but I see too much of it in the world.

Though the imagination of Dr. Horne was sometimes at play when the *speculum* of infidelity was in his hand, his heart was always serious: thence it came to pass, that the composition of sermons was a work never out of his mind; and it was the desire and the pleasure of his life to make himself useful in the pulpit wherever he went. The plan which he commonly proposed to himself in preaching upon a passage of the Scripture was that of giving, 1. The literal sense of it; then, 2. the interpretation or spirit of it; and, 3. the practical or moral use of it, in an application to the audience: and he was of opinion, that one discourse, composed upon this plan, was worth twenty immethodical essays; as being more instructive in the matter, more intelligible in the delivery, and more easily retained in the memory. Yet, after long practice, he came to a determination, that no method was more excellent than that of taking some narrative of the Scripture, and raising moral observations on the several circumstances of it in their order. His Sermon on Lot in Sodom, vol. ii. disc. xiii. and on Daniel in Babylon, vol. ii. disc. xx. are of this kind. The Noble Convert, or History of Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch, vol. ii. disc. xv. is another. The Paralytic, and the Woman taken in Adultery, belong to the same class. One of the most skilful and excellent preachers this church could ever boast, was the late Dr. Heylyn, a prebendary of Westminster. His discourse on the Canaanite was considered by Dr. Horne as a most perfect and elegant model of a sermon, on a miracle, or any other portion of the Scripture; he pronounced it to be succinct, clear, and forcible, with nothing in it superfluous or tiresome: and, it came into his mind, on reading it, that another after the same model might be composed on the Samaritan Woman and the discourse our Saviour held with her. This he lived to execute. It is still among his unpublished discourses, and is itself worthy to be printed, as a specimen of *this manner*.

There are certainly different modes of preaching, all of which are good in their way: some are most proper for one subject, some for another. One of these is that of

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Jesus Christ himself; who, from present occasions, and circumstances of time and place, made use of the opportunity to raise such doctrines as were wanting for the instruction of his hearers: the mind being under the best preparation for the conceiving of truth, when that truth is raised from the objects of its present attention. We see our Saviour at a well of water (a precious object in hot countries) discoursing on the waters of life, to a person who came, in the heat of the day, to draw the water of the well. After this example did Dr. Horne, when he was by the sea-side at Brighthelmstone, take *the sea* for the subject of a sermon; one of the most ingenious he ever composed; and, without question, peculiarly striking to the audience, who had the object before their eyes.* This naturally reminds me of a reflection he made, when, with other young people of the university, he attended a course of chemical lectures at Oxford. It was the custom of Dr. Alcock to carry his pupils over such ground, as rendered the science of great service to every person of a learned profession. The last lecture was upon *poisons:* and the subject required, that snakes should be produced upon the table, and made to bite poor harmless animals to death; whose cries, and howlings, and convulsions, after the wounds were given, were extremely affecting, and made some of the spectators ready to faint. On which he observed afterwards—"*that* would have been the moment to have delivered a theological lecture on the *old serpent* of the Scripture—that hath the *power of death*—and first brought it, with all its fatal symptoms and miseries, into the world!" And he judged right; it would have been better understood, and more felt, at that time, than at any other; for it is not to be calculated, how much the mind is assisted in its contemplations by the senses of the body giving life to its ideas, and working irresistibly upon the passions.

His opinion concerning the duties of a preacher is to be found in the preface to the first volume of his sermons, expressed in the words of Fenelon. He considered also, but never printed, the faults and abuses which every preacher should study to avoid: and, as it may be of much service to some readers, I shall take the liberty of mentioning them in this place:

> Let those teach others, who themselves excel,
> And censure freely who have written well.

"A preacher should avoid rambling upon general or trivial subjects; such as are not to the purpose; not adapted to the wants and occasions of the audience, which are always to be considered.

"He should beware of polemical and wrangling compositions.

"He should not mix things sacred and profane together, from an ostentation of learning. Such learning is quite out of place. Also a discourse, consisting of critical remarks, is fitter for an editor than a preacher. See Heylyn, i. 155. with the preface to Massillon's Petit Carême; and the note in Oswald's Common Sense, vol. i. for some very useful observations on this part of the subject.

"To be always dwelling on the expedience, necessity, and evidence of revelation, is to suppose that the audience consists of deists: for such discourses have no effect on any but deists, and rarely upon them.

"There may be a fault also, in dwelling too much on the elementary and catechetical doctrines and not (as the apostle expresses it,) *going on unto perfection.*

"It is always bad to treat religious subjects in a dull, dry way; neglecting the imagery, energy, and persuasive elocution of the Scriptures.

"Nor is it better to discourse on morality in a rigid, legal, and comfortless manner, without first warming and animating the mind to the practice of it by motives of faith and love. St. Paul, in 1 Cor. xv., discourses, for fifty-seven verses together, on the animating doctrine of the resurrection of Christ, and in one single verse, the last in the chapter, conveys the moral of the whole.

"Much time and labor are frequently lost in proving what all the hearers allow: as for example, the obligation they are under to do their duty, instead of showing and exposing the various modes of self-deceit, by which they contrive to elude the obligation, and live in contradiction to their principles. Pleas and pretences of this sort should be collected, stated, and answered in a close lively manner, till the hypocrite is completely unmasked, driven out of his strong holds, and obliged to surrender at discretion. Massillon is admirable at this, and it makes the general plan of his sermons.

"The word of God is abused by preachers, when it is accommodated and made subservient to the corruptions of the time. It is then an instrument for the gratifying of their vanity, or procuring wealth and promotion. Such traffic with the word is like that of Judas, when he sold Christ for money.

"All affected elegance, and trifling conceits, are to be avoided, as having a bad effect upon the audience, who are tempted to forget the errand they came upon, and to suppose

* See vol. ii. disc. xxx.

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that the preacher, appearing to have no sense of the greatness of his subject, is not in earnest.

"Too great familiarity of expression, with coarse images, taken from low subjects, are fulsome. Dr. South has some excellent observations in vol. iv. p. 40, on the words, 'Every scribe instructed unto the kingdom of God,' &c.

"In what is called an application, at the end of a sermon, the preacher makes a transition by the shortest way, from the subject to the audience, and shows them their duty from what has been said. A writer, strong in his expressions, affirms, that a sermon *without an application* does no more good than the *singing of a skylark:* It may teach, but it does not impel; and though the preacher may be under concern for his audience, he does not show it, till he turns the subject to their immediate advantage."

These observations upon the composition of sermons, are so much the more valuable, because we have them from a most excellent preacher, who had formed himself upon the rules he has given for others. He is a good farmer who raises a good crop; but he is a better who teaches others also to do the same; and the public are more obliged to him. If these precepts were properly attended to, the people would soon know how to distinguish between a sound teacher and an unlearned enthusiast; the Methodists would decrease and the church would be edified. If something had been added against errors in the pronunciation of sermons, I should have been glad to communicate it: but, as I find nothing to this purpose, I shall venture but a single remark upon the subject. Every preacher wishes to be *understood* as well as heard; but many are deficient in this respect, for want of a distinct articulation; which might easily be acquired, if they would attend to a simple rule, without the observation of which no man's delivery can be perfect. It is well known, that a piece of writing may be understood, if all the vowels are omitted: but, if the vowels are set down, and the consonants omitted, nothing can be made of it. Make the experiment upon any sentence: for example: *judge not, that ye be not judged.* Take out the vowels, and it will stand thus—*jdg nt tht y b nt jdgd:* This may readily be made out: but take away the consonants, and nothing can possibly be made of it—*ue o a e e o ue.* It is the same in speaking as in writing: the vowels make a noise, and thence they have their name, but they discriminate nothing. Many speakers think they are heard, if they bellow them out: and so they are; but they are not understood; because the discrimination of words depends upon a distinct articulation of their consonants: for want of considering which, many speakers spend their breath to little effect. The late Bishop of Peterborough, Dr. Hinchcliffe, was one of the most pleasing preachers of his time. His melodious voice was the gift of nature, and he spake with the accent of a man of sense, (such as he really was in a superior degree;) but it was remarkable, and, to those who did not know the cause, mysterious, that there was not a corner of the church, in which he could not be heard distinctly. I noted this myself with great satisfaction; and, by watching him attentively, I perceived it was an invariable rule with him, to do justice to every consonant, knowing that the vowels will be sure to speak for themselves. And thus he became the surest and clearest of speakers; his elocution was perfect, and never disappointed his audience. In this respect, most preachers have it in their power to follow him: his sense, and his matter, and the sweetness of his tone, were such as few will attain to. He was a prelate to whom I owed much respect; and I am happy in giving this testimony to his excellence.

The last literary work which Dr. Horne proposed to execute, while Dean of Canterbury, was a formal Defence of the Divinity of Christ against the Objections of Dr. Priestley; in which it was his intention to show, how that writer had mistaken and preverted the Scripture and the Liturgy.

I have often wondered secretly, why this good man should have felt as if he was called upon to encounter a writer of Dr. Priestley's disposition, who had already passed under the strong hand of Dr. Horsley, and would have been humbled for the time to come, had he been blessed with any feeling. That Dr. Priestley is a man of parts, a versatile genius, and of great sagacity in philosophical experiments, is well known and universally allowed: but let any person follow him closely, and he will see, that if ever there was a wise man, of whom it might be said, that *the more he learnt, the less he understood,* it will be found true of Dr. Priestley. His vanity made him believe, that he was wise enough to enlighten, and powerful enough to disturb, the world: he was, therefore, for ever busy at one of these or the other; a volcano, constantly throwing out matter for the increase of heresy, schism, or sedition, and never to be quenched by disputing. It is the way of the world, to make their estimate of a man from his parts and abilities; but it is more wise and just to measure him by the use he makes of them, to the benefit or the hurt of mankind: for the beams of the sun are used to warm and ani-

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mate; while the brightness of lightning is to shatter and consume. So long as Dr. Priestley felt nothing (or seemed to feel nothing,) it had a bad effect upon him, and made him more troublesome, that such persons as Dr. Horsley and Dr. Horne should enter the lists against him: it made him appear more formidable in the eye of the public, and so it tended to gratify the prevailing passion of his mind. So far indeed as he deceived and disturbed others, a compassionate regard to *them* might be the motive with those who disputed with him.

In the year 1786, Dr. Horne preached a sermon at the primary visitation of the Archbishop at Canterbury, on the duty of *contending earnestly for the faith;* and, when this was printed, together with another discourse on the Trinity, he subjoined an advertisement, declaring his intention to answer the objections against the Divinity of Christ, which had been urged of late. "Indulgence," said he, "is requested as to the article of *time:* I cannot write so *fast* as Dr. Priestley does; and I wish to execute the work with care and attention; after which it shall be left to the judgment of the learned, the pious, and the candid, of all denominations." At the close of this year, he alludes to the advertisement, in a letter from Canterbury; "You see the task I have undertaken." And here nobody will wonder, that as he had given me his assistance in the first work I published, and its chief merit had been owing to that circumstance, he should demand of me in return any service he thought it in my power to execute: he therefore goes on, "It is undertaken in confidence of your friendly aid: and I should be happy, as we began together with Clayton, if we might end together with Priestley." For the sake of Dr. Horne, I was ready to work under him, in any capacity he should prescribe: but it always appeared to me, that Priestley was a person of too coarse a mind to be the proper object of a serious argument. That he had borrowed most of his objections, I had very little doubt; and that his remarks on Jews, Gnostics, Ebionites, Plato, Philo, and Justin Martyr, were not original; there being a magazine in store, to which the orthodox of this country do but rarely apply themselves. If this could have been pointed out, it would have done more toward the curing of his readers, and given more mortification to himself, than the most labored confutation of the matter in the four volumes of his Objections.

Dr. Horne, I am very sure, had a mean opinion of Priestley's originality as a scholar: he speaks of him under the character of a man, *who is defying all the world, and cannot construe a common piece of Greek or Latin.** I find another note concerning him, with the date of 1788 affixed to it, taken from Dr. Johnson, who spoke his opinion of Priestley to Mr. Badcock in these words: "You have proved him as deficient in probity as he is in learning." Mr. Badcock had called him an *index-scholar:* but Johnson was not willing to allow him even that merit; saying, that he borrowed from those who had been borrowers themselves, and did not know that the mistakes he adopted had been answered by others.† There was an expectation about this time, that a controversy would break out between Priestley and Gibbon; of which an arch Quaker spoke thus: "Let those who deny, and those who corrupt, the true religion of Jesus Christ, fight it out together; and let his faithful followers enjoy ther mutual overthrow."‡

In the eyes of all reasonable men, the church of England could want but little defence, in a literary way, against an adversary so inflamed with political hatred against it, and openly avowing a design to undermine and blow up its foundations, as with an explosion of *gunpowder.*§ When it comes to this, the dispute is no longer literary: the person who carries it on in this way, should be considered (if a gentleman) as a person of an unsound mind; if *not* a gentleman, then as an object of the penal laws of his country, if it should have any against such offenders. One who is so wild and dangerous in his politics, must be a counterfeit in his Christianity: who, being *detected*, is thereby sufficiently *answered.*

On these considerations, without any view to the sparing of my own trouble, I was as well pleased to see, that the design of writing farther against Priestley was not prosecuted with vigor. How much had been collected for this purpose, I do not find: yet I know that the subject had been long and often in the mind of Dr. Horne; who told me when at Nayland, in the year 1789, he had satisfied himself in respect to every objection from the Liturgy, except one; and that was from an expression in the Athanasian Creed, which sounded like Tritheism, the Creed affirming each person *by himself to be God and Lord.* I ventured to assure him, that

* Letter, Aug. 22, 1786.

† See the Gentleman's Magazine for July, 1785, p. 596.

‡ Ibid. p. 600.

§ It was an observation of Dr. Horne, upon the curious sermon on Free Inquiry, that the author spoke of this powder-plot against the church of England with as much certainty as if he had *held the lantern.*

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the passage gave me no trouble, because I did not consider it as a metaphysical assertion, but as a plain reference to the words of the Scripture; which to each person of the Godhead, distinctly taken *by himself*, so far as that can be done, does certainly give the titles both of *God* and *Lord*.* In this, therefore, instead of depending on the Creed, we only depend, as that does, upon the words of the Scripture. With this he was satisfied, and allowed that such an intention in the Creed removed the difficulty.

The last considerable affair in which he concerned himself while Dean of Canterbury, was an application from the bishops of the Episcopal Church of Scotland; three of whom, in the year 1789, came up to London, to petition parliament for relief from the hard penalties under which they had long suffered. This they ventured to do, in consideration of the loyalty and attachment they had lately professed toward the king and the constitution.

It was my lot likewise not to be an unconcerned spectator in this business. Through an intimacy which had long subsisted between myself and a gentleman of great worth and learning in the county of Kent, (the Rev. Nicholas Brett, of Spring-Grove,) I became acquainted with the Bishop of Edinburgh, Dr. Abernethy Drummond, of Hawthornden, and had frequently corresponded with him. As soon as he came to London with his colleagues on the business aforesaid, he wrote me word of his arrival, and explained the cause of the journey they had undertaken. Being myself of too inconsiderable a station to be of any immediate service to them in a matter of such importance, I thought it the most prudent step I could take, to forward the letter to a great person; who, with his usual goodness and discretion, undertook to be an advocate for them; together with many other persons of high respectability; and their petition was at length brought to such an issue, as excited great thankfulness in the petitioners, though it did not exactly come up to the wishes they had formed at setting out.

There was no small difficulty in making some persons understand, who and what these poor petitioners were: and the case, notwithstanding all that has passed, may still be the same with many at this day. I therefore hope to be excused, if I enlarge a little in this place on their history and character, as they appeared and were known to Dr. Horne; whose good opinion will be remembered as an honor, and may be of some use to them hereafter.

He had considered, that there is such a thing as a pure and primitive constitution of the church of Christ, when viewed apart from those outward appendages of worldly power, and worldly protection, which are sometimes mistaken, as if they were as essential to the being of the church, as they are useful to its sustentation. The history of the Christian church, in its early ages, is a proof of the contrary; when it underwent various hardships and sufferings from the fluctuating policy of earthly kingdoms. And the same happened to the Episcopal Church of Scotland, at the revolution in 1688: when episcopacy was abolished by the state, and the Presbyterian form of church-government established.* By this establishment the bishops were deprived of their jurisdiction, and of all right to the temporalities of their sees. But in this forlorn state they still continued to exist, and to exercise the spiritual functions of their Episcopal character: by means of which, a regular succession of bishops, and episcopally-ordained clergymen, has been kept up in Scotland, under all the disadvantages arising from a suspicion of their being disaffected to the crown, and attached to the interest of an exiled family. While attempts were making in behalf of that family, a variety of circumstances rendered it impossible for them to remove this suspicion, notwithstanding the many inconveniences and hardships to which it exposed them. All they could do was to conduct themselves in such a quiet manner, as might at length convince the government they had nothing to fear from a Scotch Episcopal church, and consequently that there was no necessity for the execution of those severe laws, which on different occasions had been enacted against it.

At last the happy period came, which was to relieve them from this embarrassing situation. The wisdom and clemency of his present majesty's government encouraged them to hope, that an offer of their allegiance would not be rejected: and, as soon as they could make that offer in a conscientious manner, they had the satisfaction to find by the king's answer to their address, that it was graciously accepted: in consequence of

* See John, xx. 28. Acts. v. 4. and xxviii. 25, and many other like passages.

* It is notorious, that the violence of the adverse party against the Episcopal Church in Scotland began *before* the government under King William was settled: when it could not be known by experience whether they would join with it or not. Before the convention met, their clergy were forcibly driven from their churches, and their possessions seized.

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which, they could not but hope, that the British legislature would take their case into consideration, and see the expediency of relieving both clergy and laity of the Episcopal communion in Scotland from the penalties to which they were exposed in the exercise of their religion.

With this hope, three* of their bishops, as I have said, came to London in the year 1789; and, notwithstanding the ample recommendations they brought with them from their own country, they found it a work of time to make themselves and their application properly understood. It would have been barbarous, after the die was cast, to have thrown any discouragements in their way, but I was of opinion, from the beginning, that they were come *too soon:* more preparation was requisite than they were aware of. The penal laws had reduced the Scotch Episcopal church to a condition so depressed and obscure, that it could scarcely be known to exist, but by such persons as were previously acquainted with its history. Among these, none entered more willingly and warmly than the then good Dean of Canterbury. As soon as he heard of the arrival of the Scotch bishops at London, he was anxious to let them know how heartily he approved of the object of their journey, and kindly offered every assistance in his power to bring this matter to a happy conclusion. He paid them every mark of attention both at London and Oxford; and, when they set out on their return to Scotland, without having attained their object, he expressed, in very affectionate terms, his concern at their disappointment, and told them at parting not to be discouraged; for, said he, "your cause is good, and your request so reasonable, that it cannot long be denied."

In February, 1791, after having taken his seat in the house of lords, as Bishop of Norwich, he wrote a friendly letter to Bishop Skinner, of Aberdeen, assuring him and the other members of the committee for managing the business of the Episcopal Church of Scotland, that any help in his power should be at their service; and, speaking of their applying anew to both houses of parliament, he said, "It grieved him to think they had so much heavy work to do over again, but business of that sort required patience and perseverance."

It was said about this time, that the lord chancellor, Thurlow, withheld his consent to the Scotch Episcopal bill, till he should be satisfied by some of the English prelates, that there really were bishops in Scotland. When Bishop Horne was waited upon with this view by the committee of the Scotch church, and one of them observed, that his lordship could assure the chancellor they were *good bishops*, he answered, with his usual affability and good humor, "Yes, sir, much better bishops than I am."

A clergyman of Scotland, who had received English ordination, applied to him, wishing to be considered as under the jurisdiction of some English bishop; that is, to be, in effect, independent of the bishops of Scotland in their own country; but he gave no countenance to the proposal, and advised the person who made it quietly to acknowledge the bishop of the diocese in which he lived, who, he knew, would be ready to receive him into communion, and require nothing of him, but what was necessary to maintain the order and unity of a Christian church; assuring him, at the same time, that, if he were a private clergyman himself, he should be glad to be under the authority of such a bishop. One anecdote more upon this subject, and I have done.

From the present circumstances of its primitive orthodoxy, piety, poverty, and depressed state, he had such an opinion of this church, as to think, that, if the great apostle of the Gentiles were upon earth, and it were put to his choice with what denomination of Christians he would communicate, the preference would probably be given to the Episcopalians of Scotland, as most like to the people he had been used to. This happened, as I perfectly recollect, while we were talking together on the subject of the Scotch petition, on one of the hills near the city of Canterbury, higher than the pinnacles of the cathedral, where there was no witness to our discourse but the sky that was over our heads; and yet, when all things are duly considered, I think no good man would have been angry, if he had overheard us.

If the reader should wish to know more of the people of this communion, let him consult an ecclesiatical history of the church of Scotland, by Mr. Skinner, father to the present worthy Bishop of Aberdeen; a history comprehending a plain and unaffected detail of facts very interesting and amusing: and I hope he will also be convinced by the narrative I have here given, not only that the bishops of Scotland are true Christian bishops, but that the bishops of England, from the part they kindly took in the affair, do little deserve the clamor which some have raised against them, as if they were so dazzled by their temporalities, as to lose sight of

* Dr. John Skinner, Bishop of Aberdeen; Dr. Abernethy Drummond, Bishop of Edinburgh; and Dr. William Strachan, Bishop of Brechin.

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their spiritual character, and bury the Christian bishop in the peer of parliament.

The year 1789 was the fatal period, when French infidelity, with all the enthusiastic fury of fanaticism, which it had affected to abhor, rose up to destroy all regal authority, to extirpate all religion, to silence with the halter or the axe all that were not with them; and, in consequence of their success at home, undertook to shake, and dissolve, if possible, all the kingdoms of the world. When this tremendous form of wickedness first appeared, it happened that I was at Canterbury, on a visit to the dean; and being called upon to preach in the cathedral, I took the subject of the time, and freely delivered my own sense of it; which is now, I believe, the universal sense of all that are true friends to this country. But some persons, to whose affairs a similar revolution in England would have been of great service, were very much offended; and one of them abused me grossly for it in a newspaper. Not many weeks after, the dean himself, on a court holiday, took the same subject in the same pulpit; in consequence of which, the same person that had reviled me was heard to declare, that his sermon ought to be *burned by the hangman*. When he informed me by letter of this accident, he observed upon it in his easy way that, as our doctrines, in bad times, would certainly bring us both to the lamp-post, it might then be said of us, "in their death they were not divided." The character of the man, who had treated us with all this insolence, was so vulnerable from its infamy, that some other person, who was intimately acquainted with his exploits, paid off our scores to the last farthing, by exposing them to the public in a paper of the time. In so doing, he verified a wise observation, which I once received from a traveller in France, who had seen and knew more of the world than any I ever met with: "The man," said he, "who injures me without provocation, will never be able to contain himself without injuring others in like manner; some of whom will be sure to pay off my scores, and save me the trouble: and in the course of my life, I never yet found, but that somebody or other, in due time, revenged my quarrel, far beyond its value, upon that man whose ill manners and insolence I had patiently neglected."*

The life of Dr. Horne, during his episcopate, affords but few incidents considerable enough to be here related: but there was one, which became the subject of much conversation between him and some of his friends. In the summer of the year 1790, he was upon a visit at the seat of a gentleman in Norfolk, for whom he had a great regard. I met his lordship there, by his appointment; and it so happened, that, during our visit, Mr. John Wesley was upon his circuit about the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk, and came to a market-town very near us. Here he had many followers; and, being desirous of preaching to a large congregation, he sent some of his friends to the minister of the place, to ask for the use of the parish church for the forenoon of the next day. The clergyman was under difficulty how to conduct himself; but recollecting that the bishop of the diocese was near at hand, he advised them to go and ask his permission. The messengers accordingly went; and the bishop sent them back to the clergyman with this answer: "Mr. Wesley is a regularly ordained clergyman of the church of England; and, if the minister makes no objection, I shall make none." So it was determined that Mr. Wesley should preach in the church the next day. As I never had an interview with that extraordinary man, and had often desired to meet him, I would have taken this opportunity; especially as there was a matter of no small importance, concering which I had a question to ask him. But being at this time an attendant upon the bishop of the diocese, we did not know how it might appear, and were unwilling to run the hazard of such reports as might have been raised upon the occasion. But our friend, at whose house we then were, being of the laity, was under none of our difficulties; and a more intelligent person for the purpose was no where to be found. I therefore requested him to get to the speech of Mr. Wesley in private, after the sermon should be over, and to ask him in my name the following question: "Whether it was true, as I had been assured, that he had invested two gentlemen with the *Episcopal* character, and had sent them, in that capacity, over to America?" With some difficulty our friend obtained a private audience; and, after some short civilities had passed, he put his question. At first, Mr. Wesley was not direct in his answer; but by degrees he owned the fact, and gave the following reason for it: that, as soon as we had made peace with America, and allowed them their independence, all religious connection, between this country and the independent colonies, was at an end; in consequence of which, the sectaries fell to work to increase their several parties, and the *Anabaptists* in particular were carrying all before them.

* The two discourses here spoken of are to be found in Bishop Horne's Sermons, vol. ii. dis. lix. Jones's Sermons, vol. ii. disc. i.

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Something therefore was to be done, without loss of time, for his *poor people* (as he called them) in America: and he had therefore taken the step in question, with the hope of preventing farther disorders. The fact being not denied, the gentleman, who, for a layman, is as able a church-casuist as most of his own or any other order, began to inquire a little farther into the case, with the desire to know, how Mr. Wesley had satisfied his own mind in this matter, and what grounds he had gone upon. But as they were proceeding, some of his friends, either being impatient of any delay, or suspecting that some mischief might be going forward, came abruptly into the room, and reminded Mr. Wesley that he had no more time to spare. Thus the conference was ended, and our friend was obliged to take his leave. Some time afterwards (for we had left his house that morning) he gave us this account, as nearly as I can recollect; and having been present at Mr. Wesley's sermon, was so well pleased, that he wished half the clergy of the church of England had preached the same doctrines, with the same zeal and devotion.*

In this preaching of Mr. Wesley, and the subject of the conference, when compared together, we have the character of Methodism complete: *it is Christian godliness without Christian order*. It is pity we could not obtain Mr. Wesley's own sense of the commission with which *his* bishops were sent out: but, as we were disappointed in that, we must inquire for ourselves, and answer as well as we can, without his help. The case obliges us to ask these two questions: 1. With what view this was done? and 2. By what authority? By Mr. Wesley's own account, this was his expedient for the preventing of confusion: whence we may gather that he supposed confusion was not to be prevented among Christians, but by retaining the order of bishops: and farther, that unity had, in his opinion, been preserved among his own people by their relation to the episcopacy of the church of England, from which neither he nor they did ever profess themselves to be in a state of separation. Of this many proofs might be given. Their present application to the bishop of the diocese was a confession of his authority, and signified a desire of acting under it: and Mr. Wesley had presented himself at the communion in the cathedral church at Bristol, and had received it from the hands of Bishop Bagot, as the bishop himself informed me. Mr. Wesley might perhaps have considered farther, that, if bishops were wanting in America for the preservation of unity among his people, and he himself did not send them, nobody else ever would: for, as the British government did not send them, when it had power so to do, it was little to be expected they would attempt it when they had none. I cannot say what use he might make of the dispute between Dr. Mayhew, an American dissenter, and Archbishop Secker, about the sending of bishops from hence to America: which I have always considered as the beginning and cause of the revolt that soon followed: this, I say, I do not know, and it would be vain to speculate: therefore, let us now ask the second question, by what *authority* he sent bishops to America?

There are but two possible ways of putting men truly into the ministry: the one is by *succession;* the other by immediate revelation or appointment from God himself. Paul received his commission to preach, not *of man* nor *by man*, but of God, who *put him into the ministry*. Other ministers of the Gospel receive their commission by imposition of hands, from those who had received it before. In this latter way of succession, no man can possibly give that which he hath not received. Mr. Wesley, being himself but a presbyter, could no more make a bishop, than a member of the house of commons can make a member of the house of lords, who is made by creation from the king; the *less is blessed of the greater*, not the greater of the less. And, as this could not be done by Mr. Wesley in virtue of what he *was*, it must have been done in virtue of what he *thought* himself to be, a vicar-general of heaven, who was above all human rules, and could give a commssion, by a superior right vested in his own person. If he acted of himself, as John Wesley, a presbyter of the church of England, he acted against all sense and order; and, by taking upon himself what no man can take, he would introduce in the issue more confusion than he would prevent. The end will never be prosperous, when we do evil that good may come; and, if it doth not please God to uphold his own work in his own way, no man can do it for him. He may seem to do something, but it will not last: he works upon a principle, the tendency of which is not to edification but to dissolution. If Mr. Wesley did not act as of himself, but as by immediate revelation from God, and by the primary authority of Jesus Christ in his church, then he was an enthusiast, in the strictest and fullest sense of the word; and any other person, or any hundred persons, might act as he did, if they could think of themselves as he thought of

* Let us hope that the *other* half *do* preach them.

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himself. But all such confusion was foreseen and prevented, by the rules and orders of a church visibly appointed and visibly continued. When any people, whoever they are, think they can act with God against the rules of God, they are either become rationalists, who do all by human authority, and deny all spiritual communication between God and man; or enthusiasts, who think the inspiration or spirit of the Gospel has set them above the forms of the church; which persuasion terminates in spiritual republicanism. In the Christian society, two things are to be kept up with all diligence; these are unity and piety. The man who should suppose that unity without piety will be sufficient to carry him to heaven, would be under a great mistake, and he would be justly condemned and despised for it. But is not he, who supposes that piety without unity will carry him to heaven, under as great (and, if he believes the apostle, as dangerous) a mistake?* The subject merits great consideration: but I say no more of it in this place. It reminds me of an anecdote I heard several years ago, and I believe Bishop Horne was my author. When John and Charles Wesley began their new ministry, one of them went to consult with Mr. William Law, as a person of profound judgment in spiritual matters; and, when the case had been opened, and the intention explained, Mr. Law made answer: "Mr. Wesley, if you wish to reform the world and spread the Gospel, you must undertake the work in the same spirit as you would take a curacy in the Peak of Derbyshire; but, if you pretend to a new commission, and go forth in the spirit and power of an apostle, your scheme will end in Bedlam."

John Wesley was a wonderful man in his way; his labors were abundant and almost incredible:† in many respects he did good; he made thousands of people sober and godly; and, while he was doing good, he avoided evil; he avoided (at least in words) the sin of schism: he took the Christian side, in stating the *origin of power*, against the republicans of America; for which he was abused as an *old fox*, who only wanted to be made a bishop. But with all this, he raised a society on such principles as cannot preserve its unity; and thence, in effect, its existence. I now understand, that partly from the loss of their leader, and partly from the confusion of the times, they have embraced some bad opinions; in consequence of which, with little or no relation to the church, they will not much longer be distinguished from other dissenters, and may in time be as bad as the worst of them. When the lamp is broken, the snuff may lie burning for a time; but the supply of oil being gone, the light can be of no long continuance. If the Methodists would keep what they have got, and prevent their own ruin, they must do as Mr. Wesley did: they must preserve some relation to the church, so long as any church shall remain to which they may be related.

About a year after the accident of the sermon and the conference, a Life of Mr. Wesley was published by a Mr. Hampson, in which the fact of sending out bishops is confessed. This book Bishop Horne had procured; and taking it out of his pocket as we were walking together in his garden at Norwich, he turned to the passage and showed it me; and afterwards he put it into his Charge, which was the last work he printed before his death; and this brings me to the end of his *literary life*.

For the sake of those who admire Bishop Horne's works, and were not acquainted with his person, it may be proper, before I conclude, to say something of his *natural* life. When he first came to the University of Oxford, he was quite a boy; but being at a time of life when boys alter very fast, he soon grew up into a person so agreeable, that, at the opening of the Radcliffe library, when all were assembled and made their best appearance, I heard it said of him, that there was not then a handsomer young man in the theatre. But he was not of a strong and muscular constitution; and, from the disadvantage of being very near-sighted (quite helpless without the use of a glass,) he did not render himself more robust by the prac-

* See and consider the xiith and xiiith chapters of 1 Cor. the xiiith as a continuation of the xiith. Some excellent hints will be found on this subject in the Cautions to the Readers of Mr. Law, printed in the Appendix.

† Among his own people, he seemed to do more than he did. Of this I was informed by a bookseller, who, like others, had been injured in his trade by the encroachments of Mr. Wesley in the way of *book-making:* and I was witness to some instances of this myself. He put his name to a translation of Thomas A. Kempis, as if the translation had been his own: but a friend showed me an old translation, with which it agreed, so far as we could see, in every word. He put his name to a Compendium of Philosophy, though he tells us curiously in the preface, it was taken from the work of a professor at Jena in Germany: yet he must be allowed great merit in amplifying the work. He sold a work of mine, as if it had been an original work, partly copied, and partly put into English verse, without asking the consent, or making a word of acknowledgment in the title or a preface, to the author. He was free to produce any possible good from any labor of mine, without being envied; but such proceedings have too much the appearance of party-craft to consist well with honest unaffected piety.

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tice of any athletic exercise. Amusements of that sort gave him more trouble than they were worth, and he never pursued them with any alacrity. It is related of Bishop Bull, that he was not addicted to any innocent pleasure, which is often necessary to unbend the mind and preserve the body in health and vigor. The only diversion (if it may be called a diversion) to which this great man was addicted, was the enjoyment of agreeable conversation; and the same was the favorite amusement of Dr. Horne to the end of his life. I wish every young man who is intended for a scholar, had some good or some necessary reason for not being led away by any sort of recreation. It was of service to his mind that he was no fisherman, no shooter, no hunter, no horseman: the cultivation of his understanding was therefore carried on with less interruption, and his improvements were rapid. While on horseback he appeared to be in more danger than other young men: and he had a friend who was so much concerned for his safety, that he sometimes rode after him, to watch over him, without letting him know of it. But so it happened, notwithstanding his vigilance, that he saw him suffer one bad fall, upon a dirty road, into a deep slough, and another upon very hard ground, in the middle of the summer. His horse was then upon a gallop, and the fall pitched him upon his forehead; but, by the protection of a good providence, the blow only gave him a headache, which soon went off without any other ill effect. When he came at last to be a bishop, the friend who had formerly been his attendant reminded him of these accidents, and observed upon them, "My lord, I saw you fall twice, I have seen you rise three times:" meaning, that he had first risen to be president of Magdalen College, then to be Dean of Canterbury, and afterwards Bishop of Norwich. The year after he came to Oxford, he fell sick of the small-pox, which proved very favorable, and he was removed to a house upon the hill at Headington for an airing; where his recovery had raised his spirits to such a pitch, that his friends could not but observe the growing vigor of his mind, and augurate that his wits were intended for some very active part upon the stage of human life, as it afterwards proved.

In the year 1758, he was appointed junior proctor of the university; on the 27th of April, 1759, he took the degree of B. D., and on the 28th of January, 1764, that of D. D. His health continued tolerably good, till the time of his proctorship: and here it ought in justice to be remembered, that he made one of the best proctors ever known in the University of Oxford. He was strict in the exercise of his office; but his strictness was accompanied by so much mildness and goodness, that he was equally beloved and feared. His duty called upon him to visit and inspect the houses of poor and disorderly people; in one of which he took the measles, and suffered much by that distemper. The time at which this accident happened was, in one respect, rather unfortunate; for he was confined at the time when he should have resigned his office by a personal attendance in the theatre. Dr. Thurlow, the late Bishop of Durham, being at that time *collector*, delivered the Latin speech, at the close of which he spoke to this effect: "As to the late proctor, I shall speak of him but in few words, for the truth of which I can appeal to all that are here present. If ever virtue itself was visible and dwelt upon earth, it was in the person who this day lays down his office." Which words were followed by a universal clapping. It was fortunate in one respect that he was not present; for thus it came to pass, that full justice was done to his character.

On the 27th of January, 1768, on the death of Dr. Jenner, he was elected president of Magdalen College: in 1771 he was appointed chaplain in ordinary to his Majesty; which appointment he held till he was preferred to the deanry of Canterbury, on the 22d of September, 1781: and on the 7th of June, 1791, he was consecrated Bishop of Norwich, in Lambeth Chapel, on the translation of Dr. Bagot to the see of St. Asaph. After he became president of Magdalen College, he adhered to the interest of Mr. Jenkinson, (now Earl of Liverpool,) a little to the disturbance of his academical peace. Mr. Jenkinson had been one of his cotemporaries at University College: a gentleman, who, from his first appearance in the university, always promised to *do* something, and to *be* something, beyond other men of his time. It was not possible that two such young men as he and Mr. Horne could be near neighbors without being fond of each other's company. The friendship once formed was ever after preserved: and when Mr. Jenkinson, though well known to be of what was then called the court party, offered himself to represent the university in parliament, his two friends, the president of Magdalen, and the master of University College, voted for him without success. Their departure on this occasion from what was then thought the *old* and proper interest of the university, brought upon them some animadversions from a few of the warmest advocates on the other side; and little scurrilous witticisms

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flew about against them both in the newspapers; which, so far as their own persons were concerned, had little effect upon either, but that of exciting their laughter: and they have often been heard to make themselves merry with several passages of that time.

Soon after he was advanced to the presidentship of Magdalen College, he married the only daughther of Philip Burton, Esq., a lady for whom he always preserved the most inviolate affection. By her he had three daughters; of whom the eldest is married to the Rev. Mr. Selby Hele, and the youngest to the Rev. Mr. Hole. The unmarried daughter resides with Mrs. Horne, at Uxbridge. The former residence of this family near Windsor introduced him to the acquaintance of several great and respectable characters in that neighborhood, particularly Sir George Howard, who received, and may probably have preserved, many of his letters.*

In the year 1776 he was appointed vice-chancellor of the university, and continued in that office till October, 1780. His vice-chancellorship introduced him to the acquaintance of Lord North, then chancellor of the university: a nobleman, who to a fine temper and pleasant wit, had added such good principles and useful learning, that he found in Dr. Horne a person exactly suited to his own mind; and I suppose it owing to the united interest of Lord North and the present Earl of Liverpool, that he was made Dean of Canterbury. When this happened, he would willingly have quitted his cares at Oxford, and taken up his residence in Kent, his native county; but that a friend, to whose judgment he owed respect, would not agree to the prudence of such a step. As for the dean himself, worldly advantage was no object with him; he lived as he ought; and, if he was no loser at the year's end, he was perfectly satisfied. This I know, because I have it under his own hand, that he laid up nothing from his preferments in the church. What he gave away was with such secrecy, that it was supposed by some persons to be little: but, after his death, when the pensioners, to whom he had been a constant benefactor, rose up, to look about them for some other support, then it began to be known who and how many they were. He complained to one of his most intimate friends, how much it was out of his way to discover such objects as were worthy and proper, because he descended so little into commerce with the world: yet, said he, let any body show me, in any case, what ought to be done, and they will always find me ready to do it. So far as he knew, he did good; and often attempted it, when he could not know; which is more or less the case with every charitable man. The discernment of objects is the privilege of God alone; who yet doeth good unto all, where we know it not.

As often as he was at Canterbury, his time passed very pleasantly: he was in his native country: the families of the place and the neighborhood showed him the greatest respect, and were delighted with his company and conversation; if he could have indulged himself, with prudence, as he wished to do, he would have fixed himself there for the remainder of his life: but he still submitted to the unsettled life of a pilgrim, between the two situations of his college and his deanry: with every thing that lay between Oxford and Canterbury, he was acquainted, and with little besides. In the year 1788 his constitutional infirmities began to increase upon him: "I have been more than ever harrassed," said he, "this year, for four months past, with defluxions on my head and breast; they have driven me to take the benefit of the Headington air, this charming season,* which, by God's blessing, will enable me to get clear for the summer, I believe. But, as I grow older, I shall dread the return of winter. Do you know what could be done in the way of preservative? My good friends of the church wish me to continue here, and engage to do the business of the Midsummer chapter without me. I am urged to get once more upon a *horse*—as much like an ass as possible. Long disuse hath now been added to an original awkwardness: however, by keeping to a gentle pace, I shall avoid *going off*, as you remember it was my hap once to do, like a frog from a board." The visiting of some watering-place, Brightelmstone, or Ramsgate, for the benefit of sea-bathing, had often been of great service to him. But notwithstanding all that could be done, he grew old faster than his years would account for, being now only in his fifty-seventh year: so that when a design was formed of making him a bishop,

* I recollect in this place an accident which happened to one of his letters. He corresponded formerly with Mr. Price, of Epsom, whose lady was the sister of Andrew Stone, Esq. By a mistake, one of these letters fell into the hands of Mr. Stone; and it happened to contain some free remarks upon the lives and characters of courtiers. When this was lamented as an unfortunate circumstance, "No, no," said Mr. Price, "no misfortune at all—very proper those busy gentlemen in high life should see what learned men think of them and their situation."

* The letter is dated May 20, 1788.

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he felt himself by no means inclined to undertake the charge of so weighty an office; and it was not till after much reasoning with himself, that he was prevailed upon to accept it. I do not remember, that I ever took upon me, while this affair was depending, to throw in one word of advice, for it or against it; but rather that I left all things to work as Providence should direct.* It was a sincere affliction to me, when I attended him at Norwich, to see how his limbs began to fail him. The palace there is entered by a large flight of steps; on which he observed one day, "Alas! I am come to these steps at a time of life, when I can neither go up them nor down them with safety." However, he resisted his infirmities with a degree of resolution. He accustomed himself to walk early in the garden by my persuasion; and assented to it, in his pleasant way, with these words: "Mr. William," for so it had been his custom to call me for many years, "I have heard you say, that the air of the morning is a *dram to the mind*: I will rise to-morrow and *take a dram*." That the faculties of his mind did not fail, in the way it was imagined, so long as he remained at Norwich, I could show by the contents of the last letter he wrote to me, within a few weeks of his death; in which there is the same humor and spirit as had distinguished him in the prime of his life. That he was not subject to fits of weakness in his mind, I do not say: he could not persevere in a train of thought, as he used to do, but applied himself by short intervals, as his ability would permit; and in that way he could execute more than we should have expected from him, under his bodily infirmities. From two visits to Bath he had received sensible benefit, and was meditating a third, when I left him in the autumn of 1791, which he had been requested not to defer too long. At my departure from Norwich, he carried me in his coach about ten miles; and we conversed by the way on the subject of his Charge, of which his mind was full, and which he was then beginning to print. When I had made him a promise to meet him during his next visit at Bath, he set me down at Lodden, and I betook myself to my horses. That moment will for ever dwell, like a black spot, upon the mind, in which we had the last sight of a beloved friend. After this parting I never saw him more. His company I can now seek only in his writings; which are almost my daily delight. His journey to Bath, contrary to the persuasion of his friends, was deferred too long. Yet he had still such remaining vigor in his mind, that he did not intend to make his visit to Bath an idle one; but selected from his manuscript sermons a sufficient number to compose a volume, and took them with him, intending to employ a printer at Bath upon them. To this he was partly encouraged by an observation his good and affectionate lady had made upon him, from the experience of several years, that he never seemed to be so well as when he had printers about him; of which she had even then seen a striking example at Norwich. But, alas! while he was upon the road, he suffered a paralytic stroke, and, though very ill, finished his journey. Mrs. Horne after this wrote me a letter full of hope, that, as the bishop could walk to the pump-room daily, he would still recover: in consequence of which I went with some courage to London, intending to go on from thence to Bath; but was informed, as soon as I arrived in town, that he was not expected to continue many days: and the next day brought us the melancholy news of his death.

My worthy friend and pleasant companion, the Rev. Charles Millard, his chaplain, was with him at Bath, and was witness to many affecting passages which happened toward his latter end. Bad as he was, if Mrs. Horne entered the room, he spoke to her with his usual cheerfulness; although a stupor commonly oppressed him, under which his mind wandered, and his speech was confused: but from what could be understood, his thoughts were always at work upon some heavenly subject. When it was proposed that the holy communion should be administered to him by his chaplain, "By all means," said he, "you cannot do a better thing." In this service he joined with great devotion, and when it was ended, "Now," said he, "I am blessed indeed!"*

On the Friday before his death, while his housekeeper was in waiting by his bed-side, he asked her, on what day of the week the *seventeenth* day of the month would fall? She answered, on Tuesday. "Make a note of

* Very soon after the nomination of Dean Horne to the see of Norwich, a clergyman of that city, calling upon a clergyman of the city of London, said to him, "Report tells us, that the Dean of Canterbury is to be our bishop." "Yes," said the London clergyman, "so I hear, and I am glad of it, for he will make a truly Christian bishop." "Indeed!" replied the other; "well, I do not know him myself, being a Cambridge man; but it is currently reported at Norwich that he is a Methodist." The same clergyman, when he became acquainted with his bishop, was much delighted with him; and afterwards lamented his death as a great loss to the Christian church in general, and to the diocese of Norwich in particular.

* The letter of Mrs. Elizabeth Salmon, describing this scene, is well worth reading, and is given in the appendix.

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that," said he, "in a book:" which, to satisfy him she pretended to do. This proved to be the day on which he died—as quietly as he had lived. From this occurrence, a rumor got abroad, as if he had received some forewarning of the time of his death. To this I can *say* nothing; but I can *think*, without any danger of being mistaken, that if ever there was a man in these latter days, who was worthy to receive from above any unusual testimony due to superior piety, he was that man.

The affliction of his family was much relieved at this time by the friendly and charitable visits of the celebrated Mrs. Hannah More, who was then at Bath, and well knew how much was due to the memory of the departed bishop.

One of his lordship's chaplains attended him to his grave, and then returned in sorrow to Norwich: his other chaplain paid the tribute due to his memory in a plain monumental inscription. Both of them can unite in declaring, as they do with pleasure, that the loss to the Diocese of Norwich, and to themselves in particular, hath been repaired far beyond their expectations, in the person of their present diocesan,* the respectable and amiable successor of Dr. Horne. May his days be as long and as happy, in his present situation, as those of his predecessor were few and evil!

The inscription is upon the tomb where he was buried, in the church-yard at Eltham in Kent, the residence of his father-in-law Mr. Burton; and the same is repeated upon a tablet of marble affixed to a pillar on the north side of the choir of the cathedral church at Norwich; of which the following is a copy:

Sacred to the memory of
The Right Reverend GEORGE HORNE, D. D.
Many years president of Magdalen College in Oxford,
Dean of Canterbury,
And late bishop of this diocese:
In whose character
Depth of learning, brightness of imagination,
Sanctity of manners, and sweetness of temper
Were united beyond the usual lot of mortality.
With his discourses from the pulpit, his hearers,
Whether of the university, the city, or the country parish,
Were edified and delighted.
His Commentary on the Psalms will continue to be
A companion to the closet,
Till the devotion of earth shall end in the hallelujahs of heaven
His soul, having patiently suffered under such infirmities,
As seemed not due to his years,
Took its flight from this vale of misery,
To the unspeakable loss of the church of England,
And his surviving friends and admirers,
January 17, 1792, in the 63d year of his age

*This alludes to Dr. Charles Manners Sutton, now Archbishop of Canterbury.

Thus have I brought this good man to his end, through the labors and studies of his life: in all which his example may be attended with some happy effect on those who shall make themselves acquainted with his history. In writing it I have not permitted myself to consider, what suppressions or alterations would have rendered it more agreeable to some people into whose hands it may fall. As truth will generally succeed best in the end, I have made the story such as I found it. I have concealed nothing out of fear; I have added nothing out of malice; and must now commit what I have written to that variety of judgment, which all my other writings have met with.

Some slight reports have been thrown out, which, without such an explanation as I have in readiness, might be understood to the disadvantage of his memory. A short life of him was written in the year 1793,* by the Rev. Mr. Todd, a clergyman of the church of Canterbury, who has spoken very highly of him, but not above his character in any one respect. Yet some writer in a periodical publication could not content himself without making invidious comparisons, and insinuating to the public that Mr. Todd had been guilty of exaggeration; but I may appeal to the feelings of the reader, whether it be not a worse mistake, in such a case as the present, to depreciate with an ill design than to exaggerate with a good one: even supposing Mr. Todd to have done so; which to me doth not appear. I take Mr. Todd to be a man who loves the bishop's writings; and I take his censor to be a man who loves them not: and though I have enlarged on many things much farther from my own knowledge, than it was possible or proper for Mr. Todd to do, I would nevertheless advise my readers to consult his account, which I believe to be very accurate in respect of its *dates*, and in the titles, and the particular circumstances which gave occasion to the several pieces, which were written by Dr. Horne, at the different stages of his life.

It has been hinted to me that Dr. Horne had embraced a sort of philosophy in the early part of his life, which he found reason to give up toward the latter end of it. Before it can be judged how far this may be true, a necessary distinction is to be made. I do not recollect, that his writings any where discover a professed attachment to the Hebrew criticisms of Mr. Hutchinson; and I could prove abundantly, from his private letters to myself, that he was no friend to the use of

*In a volume entitled, Some Account of the Deans of Canterbury, &c &c. by Henry John Todd, M. A.

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such evidence either in philosophy or divinity. But that he ever renounced or disbelieved *that* philosophy, which asserts the true *agency* of nature, and the respective uses of the *elements*, or that he did not always admire, and so far as he thought it prudent, insist upon it and recommend it, is not true. And I need not here appeal to any of his private letters, because some of his most serious and premeditated compositions assert this in terms sufficiently plain and strong. In his Commentary on the last Psalm he shows us what idea he had formed of the natural world. On the words, "Praise him in the firmament of his power," he has the following comment: "which power is more especially displayed in the formation of the firmament, or expansion of the material heavens, and their incessant operations by means of the light and the air, of which they are composed, upon the earth and all things therein. These are the appointed instruments of life and motion in the natural world, and they afford us some idea of that power of God unto salvation, which is manifested in the church by the effects produced on the souls of men, through the gracious influences of the light divine, and the spirit of holiness, constituting the firmament of God's power in the new creation." In this passage it is the author's doctrine, that the firmament signifies the substance of the material heaven; and that this substance is composed of light and air. And farther, that these are the appointed instruments of life and motion in the natural world: that they give us an idea of the power of God, who acts in the economy of grace by the divine light and Spirit, the Son and Holy Ghost, as he acts in nature by the operation of the air and light upon all things; and that thus the two kingdoms of grace and nature are similar in their constitution, and confirm one another. In this doctrine, the doctrine of a philosophy which the world does not generally receive, the author of the Commentary persevered to the last day of his life. And why should he not, when it is palpably true? Whoever asserts the agency of nature, and the offices of the elements as here described, need be afraid of no contradiction: he stands upon a rock, and has all nature to support him; and the long experience of mankind, however it may lose itself in the endless mazes of chemistry, and leave what is useful, to hunt after what is new, does yet all tend to confirm this universal principle, that matter acts upon matter, and that the world and all things therein are moved, sustained, and animated, by the agency of the heavens upon the earth. The persuasion was once almost universal in this country, that matter is invested with attraction, repulsion, and gravitation, as *immaterial* principles: but this persuasion hath very much abated of late years; and it should never be forgotten, that Newton himself left the question open. It was indeed once thought that the motion of a secondary planet, or satellite, was a case which demonstated the necessity of attraction; but since that time, the phenomena of electricity have taught us that ether can act from an opaque body as from a luminous one; and, therefore, that the same element may move both the primary and secondary: of which discovery philosophers had no conception when gravity first came into fashion. Our Royal Society have therefore expressed a disposition to admit such a cause of motion, if it can be reasonably applied to the case. Sir John Pringle recommended it to be examined whether there be not a certain fluid acting as the cause of gravity, and of the various *attractions*, and of the animal and vital motions: and it has been argued by other members of the society concerning the solar system, as if it were *now* more apparent than heretofore, that an ether is dispersed through all space, which gives to bodies a tendency from its denser to its rarer parts. In this the followers of Newton and Hutchinson are now so nearly agreed, that it is to be lamented that science should suffer by any of their disputes, or that the name of any person should be held in contempt upon that account; particularly of so excellent a person as Dr. Horne. Why this good man should be reported to have renounced what Newton himself, if he had seen what we have seen, would probably have adopted and carried on in his superior way, I cannot understand. Therefore I distinguish once more, that the philosophy, which Dr. Horne professed, did not depend on doubtful interpretations of the Scripture, but was confirmed by reason and experience, as it was argued in his State of the Case between Newton and Hutchinson; from which he never departed, and from which no sensible man could depart. In philosophy, thus defined and limited, he and I were always of a mind. Of myself I will say but little; and that little should have been omitted, if I had not been forced upon an explanation, which I did not expect. For the proof of such a system of nature as Newton was not averse to, I published a large quarto volume, above seven hundred copies of which are dispersed about the world; and there must be learned and ingenious men to whom the thing is not unknown. Against some particulars there may be weighty objections; but against the general plan, I never yet saw

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one, that would trouble me for five minutes to answer it. Yet it does not follow, that people will see as we do. Where things have a new appearance, the world must have time; and the author who proposes them must wait with patience, and bear with every kind of opposition and defamation; the latter of which is never to be understood as an unpromising symptom; for it shows that an adversary is in distress, when he answers anything in such words, as will equally answer every thing. From the books of foreigners I learn, that attraction and repulsion are not in such estimation as they were fifty years ago. And at home, the ingenious Mr. George Adams, who has been a student and practitioner in natural philosophy for more than twenty years, has found it necessary to adopt the new agency of nature, and has made his use of it through the whole course of a large work, which may be considered as an Encyclopædia in Natural Philosophy, taking a larger circuit than has yet been attempted by any writer upon the science. Other ingenious men may in time (as I am confident they will) follow his example; till it shall be no longer thought an *honor* to Dr. Horne that he *renounced* this philosophy, but that he did *not* renounce it.

If the reader will not be displeased with me, I will tell him a secret, which he may use as a key to decypher some things not commonly understood. Between that philosophy which maintains the agency of the heavens upon the earth, and the religion revealed to us in the Bible, there is a *relation* which renders them *both* more credible. By a person with the Christian religion in his mind, this philosophy is more easily received; and if any one sees that this philosophy is true in nature, he will not long retain his objections against Christianity: but here is the difficulty; *he* will never begin, who resolves never to go on. But of any reasonable person, whose mind is still at liberty, let us ask, why it should be thought a thing incredible, that the creation of God should confirm the revelation of God? By which I would be understood to mean—that the world which we *see* should be a counterpart to the world of which we have *heard*, and in which we *believe*? Many in this age see the force of that great argument in favor of Christianity, which is drawn from the analogy between the kingdom of nature and the kingdom of grace, and admire it above all other things. Dr. Horne in particular, had such an opinion of it, and conceived such hopes from it, that he used to say, and did say it late in life, that if Priestley should ever become a believer in the doctrine of the Trinity, it would be from the Hutchinsonian philosophy. To such a declaration as this, which the reader may depend upon, I can add nothing better, or more to the purpose, than a passage from one of his manuscripts, concerning the religious use that may be made of Mr. Hutchinson's writings: and I am persuaded he persevered, to the day of his death, in the opinion there delivered. The passages is as follows:

"Cardinal Bellarmine wrote a small treatise, entitled, *De Ascensione Mentis in Deum per Scalas Rerum creatarum*, which he valued more than any of his works, and read it over continually with great pleasure, as he says in the preface to it. A work of that kind may be done in a far better and more complete manner, by the key Mr. Hutchinson has given, than has ever yet been done, and the natural and spiritual world made to tally in all particulars. Such a work would be of standing use and service to the church, and be a key to nature and the SS., teaching all men to draw the intended instruction from both. For this purpose the SS. should be read over, and the texts classed under their respective heads; and in reading other books, all just applications of natural images should be extracted from them, particularly where there are any good divisions of an image into its parts and heads, as much will depend on method and regularity. For the blessing of God on such an undertaking, without which all will be in vain, the Fountain of all wisdom and Father of lights is humbly and fervently to be implored, to enlighten the understanding, and purify the heart, that it may be counted worthy, through the merits of the dear Redeemer, to understand the mysteries of the new creation shadowed by the old, and explained in the SS. of eternal truth, and be enabled to declare it to the people unadulterated with any private imaginations, to the glory of God, the edification of the church, and his own salvation."

On the other hand, there are in this age philosophical opinions, in which infidelity triumphs: and certain it is they have too plain an affinity to the atheistical doctrines of Epicurus and Democritus, if they are not the same thing: and therefore such an evil-minded wit as Voltaire caught at them with eagerness. He foresaw how, with a little of his management, they might be turned against all religion, and lead to the abolition of all divine worship: he therefore strained every nerve to magnify and recommend them: his industry in this respect was wonderful; and we find, by fatal experience, how far it has answered his purpose. The philosophers

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of France have now seated themselves upon the clouds, from whence they look down with contempt upon every degree of Christian belief; considering even Newton himself an an example of the weakness of human nature for believing the Scripture! Where will this end?

There is another report against the name of our good bishop, which wants explanation. The learned adversary of the amiable Bishop Hurd, and of the Rev. Mr. Curtis, of Birmingham, and the friend of Dr. Priestley, a judge of all men and of all things, took occasion, soon after the death of Bishop Horne, to give us *his* character of him, in a note to a book he was then publishing; in which note many things are said well, and like a scholar: but there is one thing which, though well said, is not just to the bishop's memory; who is there reported to have *diffused a coloring of elegance over the wild, but not unlovely, visions of enthusiasm.** Where could the gentleman find these *wild visions*? In the State of the Case between Newton and Hutchinson, the author argues from the words of each, and confirms what he says by fact and reason. The whole is written with the utmost coolness of temper, and without once appealing to any ambiguous evidence. In his sermons, his sense is strong, his language sweet and clear, his devotion warm, but never inflated nor affected: and, from the editions through which they pass, it is plain the world does see, and will probably see better every day, that they are not the discourses of a *varnisher of visions*. In his Commentary on the Psalms, he has followed the plan of the writers of the New Testament, and of the primitive church, in applying them as prophecies and delineations of the person of Christ and of the Christian economy. If he is judged to have betrayed any enthusiasm in *so* doing, it is only because he happened to write in the eighteenth century; when Christian learning, under the notion of improving it, is greatly corrupted; the fathers of the church but little known,† and less relished; and the zeal and piety of the reformation very much abated. Erasmus was just such another enthusiast in his divinity as Dr. Horne, and is frequently found to have diffused a like coloring of elegance over like interpretations of the Scripture; in which, however, he is not always either so elegant, or so successful, as the late bishop his follower: yet for this, in the days of better divinity, when *faith* and *piety* were more in fashion, Erasmus was never reputed an enthusiast. A little warmth of *devotion* is very excusable in a Christian writer; and we apprehend that a very strong conviction of the wisdom and excellence of Christianity is necessary to the making of a good divine —Ου δει μετριως κεκινημενον ακριβωσ.

When a man of learning censures without justice, he opens a door for the free remarks of others upon himself. But I search not into the gentleman's writings, for any examples of severity, scurrility, adulation, perplexity of principle, smoke and smother, pedantry and bombast: let others look for such things, who take delight in finding them. For my own part, I would rather wish that my learned friend, when he is throwing his fine words about, would consider a little beforehand, how unworthy it may be found to attempt to lessen in any degree the good effect of such a character as that of Dr. Horne upon the Christian world, in its present

* The *Socinian* notion of *enthusiasm* being a curiosity which deserves to be known, I shall give it to the reader in this place. I have a book before me, published by a Mr. E——n, in the year 1772; a man, who seems no natural fool, but has made himself much worse than one through a conceit of superior Christian wisdom. He delivers it to us as a doctrine of the orthodox, that "if our belief were not attended with some *difficulties to our reason*, there would be no merit in our believing;" and then adds, "such men I shall not scruple to call enthusiasts; and to argue the case with them, would be like trying to convince the poor straw-crowned monarch of Bethlehem—who is a king because he *knows* he is a king." This gentleman tells us his mind fairly and plainly; for which we are obliged to him. But now let us try by his rule the faith of our father Abraham. He believed in his old age, that his seed should be as the stars of heaven, from a wife that was barren; and this is the belief which was accounted to him for righteousness. Here the reason and experience of all mankind were contrary: against hope he believed in hope: here were not only *difficulties to reason*, but an actual impossibility to reason. The promise might have been given before, while Abraham was young; but it pleased God to defer it till he was old, when reason could not receive it; and from this circumstance only his faith was meritorious. No, says the Socinian; this man, by my rule, was an *enthusiast*, no more to be argued with than the *monarch of Bedlam*, &c.

What the mind of that man can be made of, who receives the Scripture as the word of God, and denies that *faith* has merit in admitting what is attended with *difficulties to reason*, it is as hard for me to understand, as it is for him to receive the Articles of the church of England; and yet, if he has spoken of himself truly, I cannot deny the fact: and as this man is but a pattern of other Socinians, I do suppose it to be the opinion of them all, that the proper act of *faith* in a Christian is an act of *enthusiasm*.

† I was therefore pleased with a seasonable attempt to revive the reading of the Christian fathers, by the Rev. Mr. Kett, in the notes and authorities subjoined to the second edition of his very useful and learned Bampton Lectures, p. iii. where he recommends to the ecclesiastical student a selection from the writings of the Greek and Latin fathers. I could add other names and other pieces; but those he has mentioned are very sufficient.

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declining condition and dangerous situation; and how much more it would be for his honor to use the eloquence he is master of, rather in promoting than in hindering its influence. He knows too much of the world to be ignorant, that in this age, when so many counterfeits are abroad, when some are so wild, and others so squeamish, no wound is so cruel upon a religious man, as the imputation of a wild enthusiastic fancy: a fault wantonly imputed, by the vicious and the ignorant, to unexceptionable persons, only because they have a little more religion than themselves: and if such persons have made it their business, like Dr. Horne, to be deep in the Scripture, they will always be in danger from those who are not so. Heathens accused the first Christians of atheism and sacrilege, because they would not worship idols; and abused them as haters of mankind, only because they avolded evil communications, and refused to be "conformed to this world." Voltaire had no name for the Christian faith, but that of superstition or fanaticism. There is a very useful and judicious dissection of enthusiasm, by Dr. Horne himself, the best I ever met with, just published in a compilation by a society for a *reformation of principles*, which if gentlemen will condescend to examine, they may be better able to distinguish properly betwixt those who *are* enthusiasts and those who are *called* so.

All good men are walking by the same way to the same end. If there are any individuals, who by the shining of their light render the path more plain and pleasant, let us agree to make the most we can of them, and be "followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

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APPENDIX.

THE LAST LETTER OF THE REVEREND ROBERT WELBOURNE, RECTOR OF WENDELBURY IN OXFORDSHIRE.

[Referred to p. 34.]

DEAR JONES,

You make it a doubt whether I am a letter in your debt, or you in mine. This is a gentle rebuke for my silence; for so I must take it, conscious as I am of my own default; and, yet excusable, if frequent returns of pain and sickness may plead in my behalf. In these circumstances I have been as it were *oblitus meorum* for some months, and am therefore the more obliged to you for not applying to me the latter part of the sentence. In the month of July, had I not been prevented by a very bad fit of the stone, I was engaged to have been at ———, not without some hopes of seeing you: but it was not to be so: they now tell me I must, and I find it necessary to keep as quiet as I can. Arrived as I am at the age of man, I do not presume upon much time to come. My chief concern now is to make such an exit as my friends would wish me; which, by the grace of God, and their prayers and my own, I hope to do. The manuscript you speak of, as you seem to set a value upon it more than it deserves, I thought to have redeemed with a fair copy; but as I am now not likely to do so, you may keep or destroy it as you please. The heavy expense of your late removal must, I think, disable you from proceeding to your degree so soon as you intended. If his grace of Canterbury considers his own bounty as the impediment, he cannot do less than grant you a faculty from Lambeth. If I should see our Archdeacon Potter, as I hope to do in October, I shall give him a broad hint to that purpose. Wishing you health and prosperity, with my best respects to Mrs. J., I am, dear sir,

Most affectionately yours,
ROBERT WELBOURNE.

Wendelbury, Sept. 7, 1764.

THIS was followed, in the month of December afterwards, by a letter from Mr. Horne, which gives a very affecting account of this good man's death.

"OUR good old friend, *Robertus Wendelburiensis*, took his leave of this world about five weeks ago. His disorder was in the bowels, through which he has had no passage for ten days. But it was effected by putting him into a warm bath, and he was brought back from the gates of death; at which he expressed some regret, as having hoped that his pains and sorrows were at an end. But a relapse soon carried his weather-beaten vessel to its desired haven of rest and peace. He died in strong faith, lively hope, and perfect charity, having received the eucharist from the hands of the master of University College, who administered to him *in extremis*, and during his whole sickness. He desired that a little water might be mixed with the wine in the sacramental cup; and this was the only particularity. Large bundles of papers, bound up by himself for that purpose, were burnt, according to his order. A few sermons were left to his nephew, who was executor. He bequeathed his gold and silver medals to Mr. Gilpin, and some copper ones to Christ-Church. It is observable, that he had kept a most exact account of his expenses from the time when he was eighteen years of age. He once lent 1000*l.* to Dr. ****, which, as he took no security for it, he lost by the doctor's death, both principal and interest. He ordered scarfs, rings, hat-bands, and gloves, for the proper persons who attended his funeral. Thus we must leave the body of our friend in the dust, and his spirit in the bosom of faithful Abraham, waiting for the happy day of their re-union and glorification."

The manner in which Dr. Horne treats this melancholy subject is so tender and affecting, that I shall here add another

letter, which he wrote to another intimate friend, upon a like occasion.

To W. S.

12th Feb., 1780.

We are all much affected by the melancholy tidings communicated in your letter. They are indeed such as I have expected to hear many times; but, when they come, it seems as if one had never expected them in earnest. And yet, when the first feelings are over, we cannot be concerned for the person departed, but for ourselves only. Her sufferings were long and heavy, and, therefore, we cannot in reality be sorry to find she is released from them. For many years she was in the furnace, and it was more than usually heated. Melted down at length, and purged from dross, she is formed anew, a vessel for the heavenly temple, and does not now wish to have suffered less in the day of trial and probation. Let us copy her patience and resignation, which were truly exemplary, and prepare to follow in God's good time. Having paid the tribute of grief that is due, let us return, with fresh vigor, to the duties of life, and prepare to answer those calls, which our faith and our country, our church and our king, will shortly, I think, make upon us all.

ANOTHER LETTER TO THE SAME, ON ANOTHER SUBJECT.

To W. S.

2d July, 1788.

IN reading Gibbon, I was astonished to meet with so much gross and vulgar obscenity, from the pen of a *refined* and *elegant historian* and *philosopher;* and had thoughts of stringing the passages together, and presenting them to the public. I did not much like the dirty work, and am therefore glad to be prevented by some one, who has done it with great gravity, in the Gentleman's Magazine for June, under the style of—"Selection from Mr. Gibbon's *learned* and *entertaining* notes," &c. Who the *late prelate* was, that used to talk *bawdry* in Greek, I know not, but think it must have been ****; for they do not always go together. In the xlviith chapter (the last of the fourth volume) Gibbon has displayed all his skill to expose church-polemics and churchmen, on the subject of the incarnation, and the different opinions and councils holden concerning it. He has taken great pains to investigate and state all the niceties and minutiæ of the dispute (as indeed he had done before in the case of the *Logos* and the Trinity,) and sets off as if most seriously interested in the cause; his style more flowing than usual, and sometimes rising to a degree of sublimity, as if inspired by the subject. It would be worth your while, when you have two or three hours upon your hands, to read over the two chapters, as they stand by themselves, detached from the civil history, and form a sort of *whole* on those great and much debated points of theology. The story of the degenerate Greeks, the foolish emperors, and profligate empresses, is tedious and tormenting to read; but the chapters on Arabia, Mahomet, the Saracens, Caliphs, Crusades, Tartars, and Turks, are very curious and informing; though shocking to the imagination are the repeated carnage of the human race, and devastations of the globe, first by one set of savages, and then by another. When to these you add the intestine quarrels and bitter animosities between the Greeks and Latins, till, at the last siege of Constantinople by the Turks, one of the Greeks in high station declared he had rather see a *Turk's turban* there than a *Cardinal's cap*—one really shuts the book, almost ready, with Charlotte Smith, to write an ode to *Despair*.

As to Lindsey, as a writer, he is a poor creeping soul. I think I shall put down some strictures; but the worst is, one shall be involved by degrees in so many different controversies—nature and degree of *inspiration*, doctrine *of satisfaction*, our own *establishment*, *subscription* to articles, &c., *liturgy*, *episcopacy*, &c., (for they are all lugged in) —and now, besides the case of the *demoniacs*, the existence of any *devil* or *Satan* at all, which Lindsey denies. Another difficulty is that of obviating the sayings and examples of many latitudinarian protestants thrown in our teeth, men otherwise of great note, and universally almost esteemed—some of our own church, that were or are bishops, who have wished for a change of forms, &c. But, however, the bold strokes of Priestley, Lindsey, &c., will let them see every day, more and more, the danger of innovation, and cure them, perhaps, of their disorder.

COPY OF MRS. SALMON'S LETTER TO HER SISTER, ON THE DEATH OF BISHOP HORNE.

[Referred to p. 71.]

MY DEAR SISTER: 17th Jan. 1792.

This morning, at twenty minutes past two o'clock, our dear *lord* departed this life. He died, as he lived, a saint indeed! He had not been able for some days to express himself clearly; but yesterday, when Mr. Selby read prayers, he joined with him, and repeated the Lord's prayer with as much composure as ever he did in his life. After that he received the sacrament with my mis-

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tress and the ladies, Mr. Millard, Mr. Selby, Gilbert, and myself. And, when that was over, he said, "*Now I am blessed indeed!*" All was peace and joy and comfort within. He blessed us all severally, and thanked us for all we had done. Had you seen him bolstered up, blessing his children, and speaking comfort to his wife, in the hope and trust of their meeting again, you would never have forgot it. I am sure I never shall; nor do I wish it. We have reason to think that he did not suffer at last, as he went off without a groan, and has still a smile upon his face, as if he was alive. He is to be buried at Eltham. I can write no more, though I have more to say. Your good master may like to hear how he departed. I hope you will read this to him, though it is scarcely to be understood. I cannot say more.

Yours, affectionately

E. SALMON.

CAUTIONS TO THE READERS OF MR. LAW,

AND, WITH VERY FEW VARIATIONS, TO THE

READERS OF BARON SWEDENBORG.

[Referred to p. 42 and 68.]

FIRST. Either J. Behmen's scheme is a new revelation, or an explanation of the old. If the latter, why is it wrapt up in such mystic jargon, never heard of in the Christian church before, and not given us in Scripture language, which is the only explainer of itself?—If the former, it is an imposture and delusion; for extraordinary inspirations are not to be credited, unless vouched by miracles, which God always sent to attest his extraordinary commissions: and if they are pretended to come from him, and do not, then it is a demonstration that they come from the devil, "transformed into an angel of light." To equal the imaginations of men to the holy Scriptures of God, and think them as much the inspiration of God as what was dictated as such to the holy prophets and apostles, is strictly and properly enthusiasm. This Mr. Law has done; for he says, he looks upon the writings of J. Behmen to be no more human than St. John's Revelation.

II. Mr. Law by creation will have nothing farther meant than the formation of the world out of pre-existent matter; contrary to the sense always put upon it by the Christian church. The formation is described step by step; but the creation, in Gen. i. verse 1. must relate to the production of, or giving being to, the matter, in its dark and *inform* state. The consequence of Mr. Law's opinion must be, either that matter, though distinct from, is co-eternal with God, which cannot be; or else, that it is an emanation, generated from his substance or essence, which is the abomination of Platonism brought into Christianity. The confounding God and created nature together is the essence of Paganism, and the foundation of all the errors in the Heathen and Christian world. The Scriptures are constantly guarding against it, and distinguishing Jehovah from what is only the work of his hands. Eternal nature is a blasphemous contradiction; for God only is eternal; he only has being in himself, and gives it to every thing else. Nature may be a manifestation, or representation of God, as a picture is of a man; but has no more connection with his substance or essence, than that hath with its original, or the painter that drew it.

III. Mr. Law denies the wrath of God against sin. Now, that wrath in God is the

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same weak and infirm passion that is in man, nobody will suppose But that it produces effects, which the image of wrath executed by man is taken to give us an idea of, is a truth the Scriptures are full of from Genesis to Revelation. And it is described under all the images that are dreadful in nature; chiefly by that most dreadful of all, fire. "Our God is a consuming fire." No one will suppose from this text, that God is really material fire; but that his justice, vengeance, wrath, or whatever you please to call it, will have an effect upon sinners, that is pictured by the effects of fire upon natural bodies.

Nor can all the wit and invention of man get rid of those innumerable Scriptures that speak of the wrath of God to be executed upon a sinful world, under the lively figure and representation of it, fire; as any one may see, that will turn to the Concordance. Sure I am, that if these can be construed to mean, a *dark, fiery, whirling anguish rising up and opening its birth in the inward depth and ground of the soul*, there can be no certainty in words. The lake of fire, or hell, is not within but without the sinner; for he is to be cast into it. That inward remorse, anguish and despair make a part, there is no question, but they are not the whole.

IV. But there is a consequence that follows this notion of no wrath of God against sin, and strongly insisted upon by Mr. Law, which shakes the foundation of Christianity; viz. that Christ did not die to propitiate or appease that wrath; that he did not die as a sacrifice in our stead. This demolishes the doctrine of a vicarious satisfaction for sin, made outwardly upon the cross, by the blood of Him, who, being God, could give it infinite merit, to satisfy infinite justice; and, being man, could make the satisfaction in the same nature in which the sin that required it was committed.

Mr. Law says, God is love. True. But is he not justice and truth as well as love? Has not Truth said, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die?" And did not Justice require the execution of that sentence? God is not only just, but justice itself; and justice cannot remit the least farthing; else it were not justice. God's attributes must not fight with or conquer and subdue one another. On the contrary, they magnify and exalt one another. Thus his justice is magnified, in that it exacts full and adequate satisfaction; his wisdom is magnified, in finding out such means to make it; his mercy and love, in affording those means, and fulfilling all his promises, in Him in whom mercy and truth thus met together, righteousness and peace kissed each other. The inward application of this satisfaction made outwardly by the blood of Christ shed upon the cross, to the heart of every believer, by the hand of faith, for its justification, with the sanctification that accompanies it, by the water flowing with the blood, to a new birth and life of righteousness from the death of sin, is doubtless the great end and intent of Christianity; as much as taking a medicine is the end and intent of its being given. But the Gospel preached and read, and the sacraments administered in the church, are the instruments appointed to work all this, by the power of the Spirit that goes with them, as channels into the heart of every believer. But if, before he has received the grace of Christ by these which are the only appointed means of receiving it; or if, instead of going on with humility and diligence in searching the Scriptures of God, a person is to shut himself up and search the inward depth and ground of his heart, what will he find there but the devil, ready to take advantage of his having left his only guide, and "transforming himself into an angel of light," under the disguise of great flights of devotion and illumination, to instill his diabolical suggestions, and lead the deluded soul, blindfold, and thinking herself safe in the hands of the Spirit of God, to deny and write against the satisfaction and atonement made for her sins by the blood of her Redeemer? For by these very means have we seen one of the brightest stars in the firmament of the church (oh! lamentable and heart-breaking sight!) falling from the heaven of Christianity into the sink and complication of Paganism, Quakerism, and Socinianism, mixed up with chemistry and astrology, by a *possessed cobbler:* and, alas! when a man comes to forsake the Bible, and write against its doctrines, what matters it whether it is done by the light of nature, the light within, or the inspoken word? "Believe not," therefore, good people, "every spirit," whispering to your soul in a fit of quietism, but "try the spirits," by the Bible, "whether they are of God." Keep to *that*, and let your faith, hope, love and devotion rise as high as they will. The higher the better.

V. As to the *angelical world, glassy sea*, &c., it is a mere romance, without the least countenance from holy Scripture; nor does he, I think, produce above a text or two, by way of proof. The holy Scriptures tell us, the world was good at the finishing of it, but by the devil came sin, the parent of all evil, natural and spiritual—that Christ came to redeem us from it all, to satisfy for our sins, to raise our souls to righteousness, by his spirit

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here, and to glorify us, body and soul, hereafter. This scheme is complete, without searching after the state of the chaos before it was in being, or fancying this world to be the *ruins of the angelical*, as William Whiston did it was the tail of a comet. The same is to be said of the notion of Adam cased up in *spiritual materialities*, one over another, like the coats of an onion. How many of these he had, Mr. Law does not seem sure, giving different accounts in different books. Instead of inventing hypotheses concerning the nature of paradise, let us study the way that led the penitent thief into it, repentance and faith in a Saviour on the cross, King of kings, and Lord of lords.

VI. Mr. Law is very lax and latitudinarian with regard to the government and discipline of the church; which, though, as he says, it will not save a man, yet is absolutely necessary to preserve those doctrines that will. A hedge round a vineyard is, in itself, a poor paltry thing; but break it down, and all they that go by will pluck off her grapes. And no sin has been punished with heavier punishments, for that reason, than throwing down fences and making it indifferent whether a Christian be of any church or none, so he be but a Christian, and have the birth of the inspoken word, which is a Pope in every man's heart. But if Christ left a church upon earth, and ordered submission to the appointed governors of it, so far as a man resists or undervalues this ordinance of Christ, so far he acts not like a Christian, let his inward light be what it will. In the same manner, I think, he is injudicious in condemning *all human* writings, commentators, &c., because people are divided through the multiplicity of them. All human learning that tends not to the knowledge of God, deserves the censure he bestows in a very masterly manner. But how are we to understand the holy Scriptures, and be able to teach and explain them to others, without a knowledge of the languages in which they are written? And towards this, the labors of the faithful servants of God who have gone before us, cannot but be of great service. And, therefore, I see not why time is not as well spent in the writings of the noble army of saints, and martyrs, and confessors, as in those of J. Behmen, and much better than in searching for truth in the *inward depth* and *ground of the heart*, which is indeed, we see, "deceitful above all things. Who can know it?"

COPY OF A LETTER TO A LADY ON THE SUBJECT OF JACOB BEHMEN'S WRITINGS.

[See p. 42.]

MADAM: April 8th, 1758.

THOUGH your letter did not give me all the satisfaction I had hoped for, yet I find in it several hints, for which you are much to be honored; and, to say the truth, I never met with a person, who, after diving into those matters with which you are at present engaged, did yet possess such a spirit of humility, and remain so open to conviction. Being therefore persuaded you have no disposition to reject the truth, provided I can make it appear to you, and I have no temptation, God is my witness, to offer you anything else instead of it, I have resolved to address myself more closely to the subject in question; for, till we descend to particulars, but little good can be expected from general objections, easily obviated by as general answers; and, perhaps, after all, the real merits of the cause have not been brought in consideration.

I am ready to join issue with you, that if J. Behmen was not inspired, he must either have been a hypocrite or a madman; and that his writings are utterly to be rejected by every sober Christian. You have shown your judgment, madam, in thus bringing the whole matter to a single point; for now there is only one question to be settled: and, as you suspect me of taking up with false reports of your author, I shall not be content with any report at all, but set down his own words, or refer to their place where I have occasion to speak of his doctrines.

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You argue of the probability of his inspiration from those words of St. Peter, Acts, ii. 17. which, if you examine the place, will appear to have been applied, not to any future inspirations at some distance of time, near to the dissolution of the world, but to the present event then brought to pass: "THESE," says he, "are not drunken, as ye suppose; but THIS is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; it shall come to pass in the last days," &c., where it is plain St. Peter applies these words of the prophet to the miraculous gifts of the Spirit at the time then present. He does not indeed confine the gifts of the Spirit to that time and season only; yet his words give us no ground to expect any extraordinary effusions towards the conclusions of the world. How this affair is, and what we are really to look for, must be learnt from some other passages.

The error, I presume, arises from a misunderstanding of that phrase, *the last days*, which are taken for these days and this age, when things are drawing apace to their latter end. But, madam, the Scripture has divided the ages of the world into three grand periods; the first of which is called the *beginning*, whose date begins at the creation, and takes in all the generations till the establishment of the law of Moses: as where Christ says, "From the beginning it was not so." Matt. xix. 8. Mark, x. 6. The second is called the *old time*, or the time of the *law*, when the people of God where under the elements of the world, and the *oldness* of the letter. The third and last period is the time of the Messiah, when the law was fulfilled, and "all things became new:" and this period, from its first commencement to its conclusion, is meant by the *latter days*, the *last time*, &c.

After this rule the blessed apostle thus expresseth himself, Heb. ix. 26. "But now once in the END of the world hath He (Christ) appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." If we should here attend only to the sound of an expression, without comparing the Scripture with itself to attain its sense, we might as well expect that Christ should appear again in these days to put away sin, as to expect another miraculous effusion of the Spirit from those words alleged by St. Peter, wherein the *last days* are spoken of; for, as it is here said, "In the *end* of the world he *hath* appeared," so is it in the other place—"He *hath* shed forth this which ye see and hear." And this abundantly confirms what I have advanced, that the words in question belonged to an event not now to be expected, but then accomplished.

If we are desirous to know in what posture the Christian church should be toward the end of the world (in the sense in which we commonly understand that phrase,) that is, toward the second advent of Christ, we shall discover a face of things very different from what those words of the prophet Joel have described to us; for these days, madam, are not to be distinguished by the wisdom or holiness of those who live in them, but, on the contrary, by their abominable ignorance and wickedness. The light of God is to be almost extinguished, and his lamp going out in the temple at that midnight wherein the bridegroom cometh; and false delusive lights are to rise up instead of it. Why else is it said, 2 Thess. ii. 3. "That day shall not come, except there come a falling away first?" and again, that "when the Son of Man cometh, he should not find faith on earth;" for that "false Christs and false prophets," called in another place (1 Tim. iv. 1.) "seducing spirits, speaking lies in hypocrisy," should arise with such seeming pretensions as should be sufficient almost to "deceive the very elect;" and that these deceivers should multiply so abundantly, that, for the sake of some few, God in mercy would cut short the days, lest a total corruption should take place?

Our blessed Saviour is particularly earnest with us on this subject, bidding us beware, for that he has "told us before," that some should be enticing us into the fields and deserts, others into the "secret chambers," &c., so that ignorance cannot be our excuse if we are "led away with the error of the wicked, and fall from our own steadfastness."

So little encouragement is there to expect new lights and revelations in these times, that, on the contrary, if any man now pretend to be "some great one," sent from God to enlighten the world, we are to suspect him for one of these impostors; and as J. Behmen has assumed such a character, the probability lies strongly against him, even before we examine his credentials.

There is another thing you will readily grant; that, supposing any such deceiver should arise, with his books written at the instigation of Satan; I say *supposing* such a thing, there would be all the reason in the world to expect a considerable mixture of sanctity, temperance, humility, abstraction from the world, and other the like virtues: his writings would else stand no chance to "deceive the elect;" who are not to be ensnared by open vice and bare-faced immorality, but only with high pretences to the contrary. Hence it is, that the ministers of

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Satan never appear with their proper colors, but "transformed as the ministers of RIGHTEOUSNESS," (2 Cor. xi. 15.) even as their master himself was into an "angel of light;" and in this shape, as a great and good man has observed, the "devil is most a devil, because he can most deceive." The fact has always been as I am representing it; for, if any heretic started up in the primitive church, it was ever with some pretences to superior holiness, mortification, giftedness, spirituality, &c., that his personal character might raise the admiration of unwary men, and so make way for the most pernicious and diabolical errors in point of faith. The Scriptures give us some instances, such as "abstaining from meats," and "forbidding to marry;" to which others might be added from ecclesiastical history. The impostor is never content either with the ordinary *knowledge*, or the ordinary *fruits* of the Gospel; but would far exceed them, and outstrip the practical attainments of all other Christians; the best of whom he will condemn as *Sodomites, fatted swine, shepherds of Babel, mouth apes*, which, with innumerable others of the same cast, are the lamb-like phrases of Jacob Behmen. So that if you should find a contempt for the vanity of the world, humility, charity, and other great and shining virtues strongly recommended, this is by no means to be allowed as a test either of the divinity of his commission, or the truth of his preaching. For these are the "feigned words," (2 Pet. ii. 3.) with which he makes merchandise of unstable souls, turning their ears from the truth, that they may be turned unto fables: and if many were led away with such devices, even in those early days, when the love of Christians did even astonish infidels, when a spirit of martyrdom flourished, and the preaching of the apostles yet sounded in the church; what wonder is it if many should be ensnared by them in these dregs of time, when the love of many is waxed cold, and the truth of God is in general "evil spoken of" throughout the world.

These reflections I have set down as preliminaries; they are intended as a sprinkling of water to lay any little dust that may have been raised for the deceiving your eye-sight; and they are offered to a person whose good sense and discernment will immediately see, and, I have reason to think, as readily acknowledge, the truth of them.

The probability then, it seems, as to the affair of inspiration, is against the writings of J. B. Such things are not *now* to be expected, but the contrary. How the fact is in itself, we are in the next place to consider; and there is but one method of doing it to any purpose, which is this: there is a word of revelation before us, and we all agree that it was "given by inspiration of God." Whatever, therefore, is false, *this* must be true; *so* true, that it is the test and standard of all truth upon earth. Every thing that opposes this word of truth must be a *lie;* and he that delivers it a *liar*. If he pretend to have received it of God, it is so much the worse; for then it is not only a lie, but a *blasphemy;* and he himself is a blasphemer, because he makes the Spirit of truth the author of his lies. What J. B. has written must be judged of by this rule, and received or rejected as it shall be found to agree with it.

And, first, let us take a view of his style and method in general, which is not at all like that of the Scripture, but the reverse of it; for the Scripture is clear and uniform in its language, as coming all of it from the same author, and addressing itself to the capacity of all mankind. Even where it is most obscure, as in the visions of Ezekiel, and the Revelation of St. John, it borrows ideas from the things that are before us, and takes the visible objects of the natural creation to express and delineate what is unknown or invisible; so that if you have obtained its meaning in one case, you will be able to unriddle it in every other case of the same sort: whence arises the great usefulness and necessity of "comparing spiritual things with spiritual," that is, the Bible with itself, in order to comprehend them. But how different from all this is the style of J. B.! His ideas are rarely taken from nature, but in general from the dark science of Alchymy, in which he had dabbled till his brain was turned: hence it is that we find so much about *ether, spirit, matrix, genitrix, essence, quintessence, essence of essences, tinctures, extracts, harshness, sourness, bitterness, attraction, firebreaths, sugar of hell, salt, sulphur, mercury*, and others of the like sort, so abhorrent from the Scripture, that the very sound of them is sufficient to frighten any man but a blacksmith out of his senses. If I guess right, Paracelsus was the father of this jargon: he held it no crime to deal with the devil for the advancement of medicine and chemistry; and the chemical writers of succeeding times, after his example, have intermixed with their writings some of the highest mysteries of the Christian faith, veiled under the occult terms of their own wonderful science, to be understood only by adepts, (such as Jacob calls *the children of the lily,*) who, they pretended, were to be holy and pure from all spot of iniquity: so that your author, madam, with all his mysteries, is

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very far from being an original; and in his style and method is so opposite to sacred Scripture, that his language must not be imputed to the same author by any person who has rightly considered both. But you tell me, "The words are his own, he says: the sense only was inspired." And if he says this, he is not to be believed any way: for, in the first place, his inspired writings will then be like no other; the prophets and apostles having SPOKEN (not *thought* only) as the Spirit gave them UTTERANCE: and the whole sacred Scripture is not called the *sense*, but the WORD OF GOD; because Christ and the Holy Ghost *spake* it by the prophets, whose usual introduction is, "Thus SAITH the Lord." Hence it is that the prophet David, speaking of his own inspiration, says, 2 Sam. xxiii. 2. "His word was in my tongue;" and again, in the xlvth Psalm, "My tongue is the pen of a ready writer." Whence it is manifest, that the inspiration from the Spirit of God did, in fact, always extend to the *tongue*, and the *expressions* whether *spoken* or *written*: and there are weighty reasons why it cannot be otherwise; but I have no room for them.

Secondly. If Jacob says this, he forgets himself, and is in two stories; for, in his second book, concerning the *three principles*, chap. xxv. 51, he says, "We speak *not our own words*, but we *speak* in our knowledge and driving in the spirit that which is shown us of God." Again, chap. xxv. 100, he tells us of "*the Spirit* that *driveth his pen*:" and his *pen* could not be driven to *thought*, but only to *utterance* or *expression*. So that if what you have observed be true, that *the words are his own, he says*, then he has contradicted himself in terms, and that with regard to the first and great point of which he ought to satisfy us, viz. the reality of his *inspiration*, which can receive but little honor from such inconsistencies. But the worst is, that he hath not only contradicted himself, but the Scriptures; and that in many more instances than I can enumerate within the compass of a letter. You say, madam, he has not added to the book, but only explained it; whereas it appears to me (from some things which perhaps have not yet fallen in your way) that he contradicts it, and has added many things to it; for he has set up doctrines expressly condemned by it, and has denied several of its most positive assertions.

In the piece above-mentioned, which is the sum of all his doctrines, he preaches up "the regiment (rule or dominion) of the *stars and elements that driveth the body and soul of man*," chap. xviii. 25. But to make the soul of man subject to be driven by the influence of the stars, is no other than idolatry and paganism: it was this notion that introduced the vain science of astrology, and led the Heathen to worship the stars, as gods endued with the power of over-ruling the affairs of this lower world. But GOD warned his people against this doctrine; Jer. x. 2. *Learn not the way of the Heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven:* the same is repeated more than once in the law of Moses. And the contrary is again repeated by Jacob, chap. xx. 87. "*O Cain*, thy potent kingdom cometh not from GOD, but hath its *influence from the starry heaven*:" and again, *ibid.* "The rule and government of this world, ALL according to the *influence of the stars, not ordained of the Deity*:" which is doubly false; for the government established in the world is not from the stars, as he affirms; but "the powers that be," whether good or bad (for this was spoken of Nero,) "are ordained of GOD."

As for his explaining the book, let us take the following instance; whence will it follow that, if he was inspired, St. John, who wrote the Revelation, certainly was not. The seven golden candlesticks, as Christ expounded their meaning in vision to St. John, did signify the seven churches of Asia; and the seven stars, the angels (that is, the bishops or chief rulers) of those churches. But Jacob, taking the matter into his hands, expounds them afresh, and says, chap. xx. 42, "The seven golden candlesticks are *his humanity*, the seven stars are his *deity*:" which two expositions, as they can no way be reconciled with each other, we need only compare, to detect the ignorance and impudence of the impostor. From another passage we shall have the same conclusion, either against *him*, or against *Moses* and *St. Paul*. Chap. xi. 40, he says, "Adam looked upon the tree of knowledge, became infected by lust, and was *undone*: and, *then*, said the heart of GOD, *It is not good for him to be alone*." This throws the temptation of Adam quite into another order, and makes it arise from other causes than what GOD hath revealed to us; for Adam gives this as the reason of his fall—"The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave of the tree, and I did eat." Gen. iii. 12. To which St. Paul referring, assures us (1 Tim. ii. 14.) that "Adam" was not "deceived;" but that "the woman, being deceived, was in the transgression." This makes the woman to have been *first* in the order of the transgression, and also the immediate cause of Adam's falling after her example. But here Jacob puts in his negative. Adam, according to

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him, was deceived: and the woman was so far from being first in the order of the transgression, that the angelic man fell and *was undone, before* the woman was taken out of him: so that unless Adam was deceived and *not* deceived, and unless he was both first and last in the order of transgression, then it must be allowed that Jacob Behmen was not inspired, or that Moses and St. Paul were not; for their doctrines cannot stand together: and here we are to remember, as it was observed above, that if this man was not inspired, and yet affirms that he is, while he is so often giving the lie to the Spirit of God, he is not only a liar of the worst sort, but a blasphemer.

You tell me, madam, he has given no new revelation. So he says, indeed, that he *writes no new thing:* but what is that account of a *limbus*, or *matrix* of pre-existing matter, out of which the world was *generated, born,* and *at length created*? Chap. iv. What is that *heavenly flesh*, that *quintessence of the stars*, of which man's *body* was made, chap. x. 10, though God hath revealed to us, that he "formed man of the dust of the ground?" To which also St. Paul alluding, says, "The first man is of the earth, earthy." What, again, but a new revelation is that strange story, that *Adam should have propagated an angelical host out of his own will, without pain, by awakening in himself* the paradisiacal centre? Chap. x. 12. What is this centre? Have Moses or the prophets spoken of it? And are we not told that God said to Adam and Eve in their state of innocence, "Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth?" Again, where did he learn that Adam had no entrails, stomach, or guts? Chap. x. 19. Yet in the perfect state of Adam, God bade him *eat* of the trees of the garden. Therefore, says Jacob, he must have *taken it into his mouth, and not into the body.* Surely, madam, this is not to explain the book of God, but to deny it, and to reveal to us such wonderful stuff instead of it, as is not fit to be repeated or thought of. Yet these things, according to the author, are the *root and ground of the depth;* without allowing which he affirms we can know nothing at all. But if there are any depths here, I will be bold to say, they are the *depths of Satan*, without fearing any mischief from that profusion of threatenings and imprecations which this man hath bestowed, throughout his works, on all those who dare to gainsay his doctrines.

I might here add something upon his *Light of Nature;* which, as he has described it at large, is the great mystery of Pagan enthusiasm, and the root of modern infidelity; —his abominable pride, where he says, *we,* meaning *himself* and the *Spirit of God,* with his frequent boastings of high and unutterable knowledge, meaning such stuff as I have just now repeated;—the foul venom of his tongue, in railing at the authority of the church, and all Christian divines from the days of the apostles down to his own, without excepting any that I can yet find, unless it be some of the primitive heretics, who were just such saints as himself;—his ridiculous and anti-scriptural interpretation of words; for when the Gospel hath given us the important sense and interpretation of the name *Jesus*, "For he shall SAVE his people from their sins," he goes to his deep language of nature, and declares with much pomp, that "*Je* is his *humbling*, and the syllable *Sus* presseth aloft through." Chap. xxii. 76. These and many other things I might expose at large: but as I am assured from your own words, and am satisfied from the whole spirit of your writing, that you have humility enough to confess an error, when you are convinced of it, I will not weary your patience with any farther observations on the writings of Jacob Behmen; but shall here conclude them, with heartily recommending you and my own poor endeavors to the grace and blessing of Almighty God.

You seem to take it ill that I *apprehended some danger for you;* which indeed I did more than I do at present: yet I rejoice, madam, that any occurrence or any instrument, be it who or what it will, has taught you to despise the world, and stirred up in you a thrist after the wisdom of God. In this, go on and prosper: I heartily bid you God speed! and, if you desire to learn the knowledge of divine mysteries for your edification and comfort in this vale of misery, there are ways and means, though the *well is deep*, by which, through God's blessing on your industry, much *living water* may be drawn out of it; and that without letting down into it the vessel of J. Behmen. If any mysteries of the Scriptures are rightly explained by him (and it would be hard indeed, if, with all his pretences, he had not hit upon something,) the same have also been explained by more sober men, and in a far better manner. An English reader need not be at a loss for the interpretation of the Scripture, so long as the writings of Bishop Andrews, Hall, Brownrig, and Mr. Leslie, and many others, are current amongst us. These are some of the books I would humbly recommend to your reading. Andrews is a noble and profitable expositor: one of his sermons on the Passion is the greatest human composition extant on the subject: his discourses on Repentance and Humilia-

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tion, on the necessity of receiving the Holy Spirit, with the Way to distinguish his genuine Fruits, are all admirable. His Devotions breathe a most exalted spirit of piety, while they contain a complete body of the Christian mysteries. There are some English editions; but the best is from a Greek and Latin copy found among his papers after his death, blotted and soiled with his tears. Bishop Brownrig has, among other excellent discourses, eight sermons on the Transfiguration, wherein the great mysteries of that part of our Saviour's history are unfolded with equal skilfulness and piety. Leslie, in his History of Sin and Heresy, will lay open to you the whole mystery of iniquity, traced from the fall of Lucifer out of heaven, down to the modern heresies and blasphemies: and, if you would see every false pretence to inspiration detected and exposed beyond a possibility of a reply, you may look into his pieces against the Quakers, with his preface on Antonietta Bourignon. His works are in two volumes in folio, easily to be met with. For the spiritual dispositions no author exceeds Kempis in his Imitation of Jesus Christ. Dr. Cave's Lives of the Primitive Fathers, is a book very useful and entertaining, necessary to give some notion of the primitive times, with that knowledge, spirit, and discipline, which are now departed from amongst us.

There is one book more which I believe may be very acceptable; and, as you are already in possession of Bishop Hall, it is the last I shall mention; —that is—Quesnel's Moral Reflections on the New Testament. He has a great talent in speaking to the heart, and applying the history of the Gospel so as to advance us in the spirit and practice of the Christian life. I had almost forgotten Mr. Wogan, the last able expositor which this church has produced; whose four volumes on the Proper Lessons are in the hands of many pious people, and are greatly recommended by those who make the Bible their study.*

After all that can be said, the Holy Ghost himself is the best interpreter of his own writings; and so boundless is the treasure therein contained, that the Scripture compared with itself will frequently open some things to the faithful inquirer, of which no commentator will inform us. But, nevertheless, our weakness is obliged to call in the help of our brethren on several occasions; and, though the Scripture be itself the *word of life*, yet it is profitably *held forth* to us by the hand of *man*, and placed on a candlestick, that they which are in the house may see the light, and partake of its influences.

That this may ever be the fruit of all *your* reading, and that the light of God's revelation may clear up all your doubts, and guide your feet through the paths of sound and wholesome doctrine into the way of eternal peace, is the sincere wish and prayer of,

Madam,

Your most obliged, &c. &c. &c.

* If this letter had been of modern date, the writer of it would certainly have added the Commentary on the Psalms: and perhaps he might have added the Lectures on the Figurative Language of the Scripture; and certainly Mr. Waldo's Commentary on the Liturgy of the church of England.

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POEMS.

HAVING MENTIONED (p. 34) DR. HORNE'S TURN FOR POETICAL COMPOSITION, THE EDITOR THINKS THE READER WILL NOT BE DISPLEASED, IF A FEW OF HIS POEMS ARE ADDED FOR A SPECIMEN.

THE FRIEND.

I.

THE fastest friend the world affords
Is quickly from me gone:
Faithless behold him turn his back,
And leave me all alone!

II.

"My friend, sincerely yours *till death*:"
The world no farther goes;
Perhaps, while *earth to earth* is laid,
A tear of pity flows.

III.

Be thou, my *Saviour*, then, my *friend*,
In thee my soul shall trust,
Who false will never prove in death,
Nor leave me in the dust.

IV.

Home while my other friends return,
All solemn, silent, sad,
With thee my flesh shall rest in hope,
And all my bones be glad.

THE LEAF.

WE ALL DO FADE AS A LEAF.

Isa. lxiv. 6.

I.

SEE the leaves around us falling,
Dry and wither'd to the ground;
Thus to thoughtless mortals calling,
In a sad and solemn sound:

II.

Sons of Adam, once in Eden
Blighted when like us he fell,
Hear the lecture we are reading,
'Tis, alas! the truth we tell.

III.

Virgins, much, too much, presumin.
On your boasted white and red,
View us late in beauty blooming,
Number'd now among the dead.

IV.

Griping misers, nightly waking,
See the end of all your care;
Fled on wings of our own making,
We have left our owners bare.

V.

Sons of honor, fed on praises,
Flutt'ring high in fancied worth,
Lo! the fickle air, that raises,
Brings us down to parent earth.

VI.

Learned sophs, in systems jaded,
Who for new ones daily call,
Cease, at length, by us persuaded,
Ev'ry leaf must have its fall!

VII.

Youths, though yet no losses grieve you,
Gay in health and manly grace,
Let not cloudless skies deceive you,
Summer gives to autumn place.

VIII.

Venerable sires, grown hoary,
Hither turn th' unwilling eye,
Think, amidst your falling glory,
Autumn tells a winter nigh.

IX.

Yearly in our course returning,
Messengers of shortest stay,
Thus we preach this truth concerning,
"Heav'n and earth shall pass away."

X.

On the Tree of Life eternal,
Man, let all thy hope be staid,
Which alone, for ever vernal,
Bears a leaf that shall not fade.

AN ODE.

THE SENTIMENT FROM THE DIVINE HERBERT.

I.

SWEET day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
Bridal of earth and sky,
The dew shall weep, thy fall to-night;
For thou, alas! must die.

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II.

Sweet rose, in air whose odors wave,
And color charms the eye,
Thy root is ever in its grave,
And thou, alas! must die.

III.

Sweet Spring, of days and roses made,
Whose charms for beauty vie,
Thy days depart, thy roses fade,
Thou too, alas! must die

IV.

Be wise then, Christian, while you may,
For swiftly time is flying;
The thoughtless man, that laughs to-day,
To-morrow will be dying.

THE FLOWERS.

THE HELIOTROPE.

THROUGH all the changes of the day,
I turn me to the SUN:
In clear or cloudy skies I say
Alike—*Thy will be done!*

THE VIOLET.

A LOWLY flow'r, in secret bow'r,
Invisible I dwell;
For blessing made, without parade,
Known only by my smell.

THE LILY.

EMBLEM of Him, in whom no stain
The eye of Heav'n could see,
In all their glory, monarchs vain
Are not array'd like me.

THE ROSE.

WITH ravish'd heart that crimson hail,
Which in my bosom glows:
Think how the lily of the vale
Became like Sharon's rose.

THE PRIMROSE.

WHEN Time's dark winter shall be o'er,
His storms and tempests laid,
Like me you'll rise, a fragrant flow'r,
But not, like me, to fade.

THE GARDEN

THE bow'r of innocence and bliss
Sin caus'd to disappear:
Repent, and walk in faith and love—
You'll find an *Eden* here.

A MORNING HYMN ON EASTER-DAY.

I.

HARK! the shrill herald of the morn
Begins the sons of men to warn,
And bids them all arise,
To celebrate his great renown,
Who sends the light refulgent down,
To bless our longing eyes.

II.

At this the fainting shadows die,
The pow'rs of darkness swiftly fly
Before the morning star;
Pale trembling murder dares not stay,
And fiends, abash'd at sight of day,
Back to their den repair.

III.

'Tis this the weary sailor cheers,
Who now no more the tempest hears,
Which morning bids to cease:
O come that day-spring from on high,
When discord shall with darkness fly,
And all be light and peace!

IV.

'Twas this that drew repentant tears
From Peter, led by worldly fears
His master to disown;
Warn'd by the monitor of day,
He cast the works of night away,
And sought th' abjured sun.

V.

Whene'er the bird of dawning crows,
He tells us all how Peter rose,
And mark'd us out the road:
That each disciple might begin,
Awake, like him, from sleep and sin,
To think betimes on God.

VI.

Smote by the eye that looks on all,
Let us, obedient to the call
Arise to weep and pray;
Till mournful, as on sin we muse,
Faith, like an angel, tells the news,
"The Lord is ris'n to-day!"

ON DAVID GARRICK'S FUNERAL PROCESSION.

THROUGH weeping London's crowded streets,
As Garrick's fun'ral passed,
Contending wits and nobles strove,
Who should forsake him last.

Not so the world behav'd to *him*,
Who came that world to save,
By solitary Joseph borne
Unheeded to the grave.

If what is done by mortals here
Departed spirits know,
Confus'd and blushing, Garrick views,
This grand parade of woe.

Though much to be admir'd by man,
He had—yet, gracious Heav'n!
Much, very much he had, indeed,
By thee to be forgiv'n.

But thou art good!—And since he died
Composed, without a groan,
Repentant David, let us hope,
May live through *David's Son*.

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WRITTEN AT AN INN.

I.

From much-loved friends whene'er I part,
A pensive sadness fills my heart;
Past scenes my fancy wanders o'er,
And sighs to think they are no more.

II.

Along the road I musing go,
O'er many a deep and miry slough:
The shrouded moon withdraws her light,
And leaves me to the gloomy night.

III.

An inn receives me, where unknown
I solitary sit me down:
Many I hear, and some I see,
I nought to them, they nought to me.

IV.

Thus in these regions of the dead
A pilgrim's wand'ring life I lead,
And still at ev'ry step declare,
I've no abiding city here:

V.

For very far from hence I dwell,
And therefore bid the world farewell,
Finding of all the joys it gives
A sad remembrance only lives.

VI.

Rough stumbling-stones my steps o'erthrow,
And lay a wand'ring sinner low,
Yet still my course to heav'n I steer,
Though neither moon nor stars appear!

VII.

The world is like an inn; for there
Men call, and storm, and drink, and swear;
While undisturb'd a Christian waits,
And reads, and writes, and meditates.

VIII.

Though in the dark oft-times I stray,
The Lord shall light me on my way,
And to the city of the sun
Conduct me, when my journey's done.

IX.

There by these eyes shall He be seen,
Who journey'd for me in an inn;
On Sion's hill I those shall hail
From whom I parted in the vale.

X.

Why am I heavy then and sad,
When thoughts like these should make me glad?
Muse then no more on things below;
Arise, my soul, and let us go.

THE MONKISH LATIN HYMN,

USED AS A GRACE AFTER MEAT, AT MAGDALEN COLLEGE, OXFORD.

I.

Te Deum patrem colimus,
Te laudibus prosequimur,
Qui corpus cibo reficis,
Cœlesti mentem gratiâ.

II.

Te adoramus, O Jesu,
Te, Fili unigenite,
Te, qui non dedignatus es
Subire claustra virginis

III.

Actus in crucem factus es
Irato Deo victima;
Per te, Salvator unice,
Vitæ spes nobis rediit.

IV.

Tibi, æterne Spiritus,
Cujus afflatu peperit
Infantem Deum Maria,
Æternum benedicimus.

V.

Triune Deus, hominum,
Salutis autor optime,
Immensum hoc mysterium
Ovanti linguâ canimus.

TRANSLATION.

I.

Thee, mighty Father, we adore,
And praise thy Name for evermore;
Whose bounty feeds all Adam's race,
And cheers the hungry soul with grace.

II.

Great co-eternal Son, to thee,
With one consent we bow the knee;
For our salvation man become,
Thou didst not scorn the virgin's womb.

III.

The Paschal Lamb, foreshown of old,
In thee, sweet Jesu! we behold,
And pardon through thy blood receive,
While on thy cross we look and live.

IV.

Thee too, all-hallow'd mystic Dove,
We ever bless, and ever love:
Thy wonders how shall we declare?
The Lord was born, the virgin bare!

V.

Almighty everlasting Three,
No other God we have but thee;
Thy glorious work, immortal King,
In triumph thus we daily sing.

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ESSAYS AND THOUGHTS

ON

VARIOUS SUBJECTS,

AND FROM

VARIOUS AUTHORS,

&c.

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ESSAYS AND THOUGHTS,

ON

VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

ABBEY LANDS.

Sir Benjamin Rudyard in a speech (preserved by Nelson, ii. 300.) mentions it as the *principal parliamentary motive* for seizing the abbey lands by Henry VIII. that they would so enrich the crown, as that the people should *never be put to pay subsidies again;* and an army of 40,000 men for the defence of the kingdom should be maintained with the overplus. How did the matter turn out? Sir Benjamin tells us, "God's part, religion, by his blessing, has been tolerably well preserved; but it hath been saved *as by fire;* for the rest is consumed and vanished. The people have paid subsidies ever since, and we are now in no very good case to pay an army." [A more exact account of this design and its consequences may be found in Sir Henry Spelman's History of Sacrilege, chap. vii.]

ABELARD.

The bad tendency of Mr. Pope's Eloisa to Abelard is remarked by Sir John Hawkins, in his History of Music, vol. ii. page 23, as depreciating matrimony, and justifying concubinage. This is founded on a false fact; Abelard *was* married. The original letters are finer than even Pope's: they were published A. D. 1718, by Rawlinson, from a MS. in the Bodleian library. Sir John Hawkins, speaking of Abelard's skill in scholastical theology, and profligacy of manners, makes the following sensible observation: "To say the truth, the theology of the schools, as taught in Abelard's time, was merely scientific, and had as little tendency to regulate the manners of those who studied it, as geometry, or any other of the mathematical sciences."—The observation may be extended to *other* modes of studying divinity.

ADVERSITY.

The fiery trials of adversity have the same kindly effect on a Christian mind, which Virgil ascribes to burning land. They purge away the bad properties, and remove obstructions to the operations of heaven.

——Sive illis omne per ignem
Excoquitur vitium, atque exsudat inutilis humor;
Seu plures calor ille vias et cæca relaxat
Spiramenta, novas veniat qua succus in herbas.
Georg. i. 87.

Or when the latent vice is cur'd by fire,
Redundant humours through the pores expire;
Or that the warmth distends the chinks, and makes
New breathings, whence new nourishment she takes;
Or that the heat the gaping ground constrains,
New knits the surface, and new strings the veins.
Dryden, 128.

ALCORAN.

Extravagant praises are bestowed by Sale and his disciples on the Koran, which equal the enthusiasm of Mahomet and his followers; going every length but that of saying, it was dictated by the Spirit of God—Wonderful and horrible! This is not much noticed; not mentioned, I think, in White's Lectures, as it should have been, and exposed. [But if any reader wants satisfaction on the subject of Mahometanism, he will find it in Dr. Prideaux's Life of Mahomet.]

AMBITION.

The ambitious man employs his time, his pains, and his abilities, to climb to a summit,

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on which, at last, he stands with anxiety and fear, and from which if he fall, it must be with infamy and ruin. A man of like turn in the time of Charles II. had, by like unwearied application, attained a like situation, on the top of Salisbury spire. Every sober thinking man will say in one case what the merry monarch said in the other: "Make the fellow out a patent, that no one may stand there but himself."

ANGELS.

Man, a minister of Christ in particular, should resemble them in reconciling duty with devotion. They *minister to the heirs of salvation*; yet, *always behold* the *face of their Father in heaven.*

AFRICAN ANTS.

These insects sometimes set forward in such multitudes, that the whole earth seems to be in motion. A corps of them attacked and covered an elephant quietly feeding in a pasture. In eight hours, nothing was to be seen on the spot, but the skeleton of that enormous animal, neatly and completely picked. The business was done, and the enemy marched on after fresh prey.—Such power have the smallest creatures acting in concert.

APOPHTHEGMS.

It is said, I think, of bishop Sanderson, that, by frequently conversing with his son, and scattering short apophthegms, with little pleasant stories, and making useful applications of them, the youth was, in his infancy, taught to abhor vanity and vice as monsters.

ASSES.

There are wild asses in South America. They have three properties which bear a moral application. 1. Though exceedingly swift, fierce, and untractable, after carrying the first load, their celerity leaves them, their dangerous ferocity is lost, and they soon contract the stupid look and dulness of the asinine species: one of them becomes like another ass. 2. If that more noble animal a horse happens to stray into the places where they feed, they all fall upon him; and, without giving him the liberty of flying from them, they bite and kick him till they leave him dead upon the spot. 3. They are very troublesome neighbors, making a most horrid noise; for, whenever one or two of them begin to bray, they are answered in the same vociferous manner by all within reach of the sound, which is greatly increased and prolonged by the repercussions of the valleys and breaches of the mountains. Ulloa, i. 248. [An English gentleman, resident in the East, kept one of the asses of the country for his use, who was so troublesome with his noise, that he ordered a slave to strike him on the nose with a cane when he began to vociferate; in consequence of which, the creature in a few days fell from his appetite, and would actually have pined away and died, for want of the liberty of making his own frightful noise.]

ATHANASIAN CREED.

The doctrines in the public service (as a noble author has supposed) are not the true cause why people of rank, &c. absent themselves; but downright ungodliness, amusements, racing, hunting, gambling, visiting and intriguing—setting out for Newmarket on a Sunday, &c. Would the gentlemen of the turf come the more to church if the Athanasian Creed were struck out, &c.?

It is not true that these doctrines "are acknowledged to be ill founded and unscriptural by every clergyman of learning and candor;" or that "no man of sense and learning can maintain them." There have been and are many instances both of laity and clergy that hold them to be scriptural, and maintain them as such. The abettors of heresy and infidelity are not the only *men of sense* in the nation, [in *good manners* they certainly do not abound.] Dr. Middleton, when he had apostatized, by *men of sense* meant *infidels.* [This article was occasioned by a pamphlet styled Hints, &c. ascribed to the D. of G.]

AVARICE.

1. A *canine appetite* inclines persons to take down their food in such quantities, that they vomit it up again like *dogs.* So Job of the rapacious greedy oppressor: "He hath swallowed down riches, and he shall vomit them up again:" chap. xx. 15. What is *avarice*, but such an appetite of the mind?

2. He, who flatters himself that he resolves to employ his fortune well, though he should acquire it ill, ought to take this with him, that such a compensation of evil by good may be allowed after the fact, but is deservedly condemned in that purpose. And it may be observed, that a resolution of this kind, taken beforehand, is seldom carried into act afterwards. *Nemo unquam imperium flagitiis quæsitum bonis artibus exercuit.*—Tacit. Hist. i.——No one ever exercised with virtue power obtained by crimes.

3. The eagerness with which some men seek after gold would lead one to imagine 't

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had the power to remove all uneasiness, and make its possessors completely happy; as the Spaniards pretended to the Mexicans, that it cured them of a pain at the *heart*, to which they were subject.

4. Riches will make a man just as happy as the emperor of Siam's white elephant, who is ridden by nobody, lives at his ease, is served in plate, and treated like a monarch.

5. It is worthy of observation, that Perseus, who lost the Macedonian empire, was infamous for his avarice; and Paulus Emilius, his conqueror, so entirely the reverse, that he ordered all the gold and silver that was taken, into the public treasury, without seeing it; nor ever was one farthing the richer for his victories, though always generous of his own to others.

6. At a time when Persian bribes were very rife at Athens, a porter humourously proposed, that twelve of the poorest citizens should be annually sent ambassadors to the Persian court, to be enriched by the king's presents. Ibid.—Poor men should be made ministers of state in England, for the same purpose.

BEARS.

Their sagacity is very great. The Kamtschadales are obliged to them for what little advancement they have hitherto made, either in the sciences or the *polite arts*. From them they learned the value of simples for internal use and external application. They acknowledge the bears likewise for their *dancing-masters:* what they call the *bear dance* is an exact counterpart of every attitude and gesture peculiar to this animal, through its several functions: and this is the foundation and ground-work of all their other dances, and what they value themselves most upon. King, iii. 308, chap. v.

BENTLEY.

Bentley is a model for polemical preaching, on account of the conciseness, perspicuity, and fairness with which objections are stated, and the clear, full, and regular manner in which they are answered.

BIGOTRY.

Arabes artium et literarum omnium adeo rudes erant, ut id imprimis curasse putentur, ne prophetam *suum* illiteratum (*uti vulgo audiit Mahommedes*) *scientiæ superarent.* Spencer de Leg. Hebræ. lib. ii. cap. 1, sect. 3.—The Arabians were so utterly unskilled in arts and sciences of every kind, that they seem to have been anxious, above all things, not to surpass in knowledge their prophet Mahomed, generally allowed to be illiterate.

BLIND MAN.

"I never had the happiness," said the blind man in the Princess Palatine's dream, "to behold the light and the glories of the firmament, nor can I form to myself the least idea of the transcendent beauties I have often heard mentioned. Such is my sad condition; and from my situation all presumptuous beings may learn, that many very excellent and wonderful things exist, which escape human knowledge." What inestimable and divine truths are there not in nature, devoutly to be wished for, though we cannot imagine or comprehend them! See Bossuet's Fun. Orat. on this princess.

BLINDNESS OF INFIDELITY.

Josephus tells us, that in the last dreadful ruin of his unhappy countrymen, it was familiar with them "to make a jest of divine things, and to deride, as so many senseless tales and juggling impostures, the sacred oracles of their prophets;" though they were then fulfilling before their eyes, and even upon themselves. Hurd on the Prophecies, p. 434.

BLONDEL.

David Blondel's book is a magazine for the writers against episcopacy. It was drawn up at the earnest request of the Westminster Assembly, particularly the Scots. It closed with words to this purpose: "By all that we have said to assert the rights of presbytery, we do not intend to invalidate the ancient and apostolical constitution of episcopal pre-eminence: but we believe that, wheresoever it is established conformably to the ancient canons, it must be carefully preserved; and wheresoever, by some heat of contention or otherwise, it hath been put down, or violated, it ought to be reverently restored." This raised a great clamor, and the conclusion was suppressed. On the report getting about, John Blondel, then residing in London, wrote to his brother David, who acknowledged that it was true. See Du Moulin's Letter to Durel, at the end of Bennet on Joint Prayer.

BODY AND SOUL.

The reciprocal influence of these upon each other is fully and clearly set forth in the second volume of a *Philosophical Essay on Man.* Two inferences are to be drawn from this consideration. First, that we should stock the soul with such ideas, sentiments, and affections, as have a benign and salutary influence upon the body. Secondly, that we should keep the body, by temper-

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ance, exercise, &c., in that state which has a like benign and salutary influence on the soul. The common practice is exactly the reverse. Men indulge passions in the soul which destroy the health of the body, and introduce distempers into it which impair the powers of the soul. Man being a compound creature, his happiness is not complete till both parts of the composition partake of it. This has been well stated by Saurin, diss. xxiii. p. 200, where mention is made of a treatise of Capellus on the state of the soul after death.

BOOKS.

1. It is with books as with animals: those live longest with which their parents go longest before they produce them.

2. When we study the writings of *men*, it is well if after much pains and labor we find some few particles of truth amongst a great deal of error. When we read the *Scriptures*, all we meet with is truth. In the former case, we are like the Africans on the Dust Coast, of whom it is said, that they dig pits nigh the water-falls of mountains abounding with gold, and then, with incredible pains and industry, wash off the sand, till they espy at the bottom two or three shining grains of the metal, that pays them only as laborers. In the latter case, we work in a mine sufficient to enrich ourselves and all about us.

3. Of the Spanish books, says Montesquieu, the only one good for anything is that which was written to show that all the rest were good for nothing.

4. Sir Peter Lely made it a rule, never to look at a bad picture, having found by experience that, whenever he did so, his pencil took a tint from it. Apply this to bad books and bad company.

5. I have said, and I abide by it, cries Voltaire, that the fault of most books is their being too long. A writer who has reason on his side will always be concise.

6. The books which composed the Alexandrian library were employed to heat the baths in that city, then 4,000 in number; yet were they six months in consuming. The reasoning of the Caliph at that time was: Either these books are agreeable to the book of God, or they are not. If they are, the Koran is sufficient without them; if they are not, they ought to be destroyed.

7. The greatest and wisest men have not been proof against the errors and superstitious conceits of the age in which they lived. Augustus Cæsar thought the skin of a sea-calf to be a preservative against lightning; and expected some grievous calamity to befall him in the course of the day, if at rising he happened to put the left shoe upon the right foot:—but we are not therefore to say, that Augustus Cæsar was a fool. The very learned and able Bishop Jeremy Taylor, on a certain topic, asserts what was rather suited to the notions current in his time, than what was philosophically true; but it does not follow, that the *Holy Living and Dying*, in which this passage occurs, is therefore a foolish book. He would be indeed a foolish man, who should catch at such a passage, and make it a reason for rejecting all the excellent instruction and counsel contained in that golden treatise.

8. Bossuet, before he sat down to compose a sermon, read a chapter in the prophet Isaiah, and another in Rodriguez's tract on Christian perfection. The former fired his genius, the latter filled his heart. Dominichino never offered to touch his pencil, till he found a kind of enthusiasm or inspiration upon him.—Biog. Dict.

9. Patrons are but too apt to reward their authors with compliments, when they want bread. Sorbiere being treated in this manner by his friend Pope Clement IX., is said to have complained in the following humorous terms:—"Most Holy Father, you give ruffles to a man who is without a shirt."

10. Valesius used to say, he learned more from *borrowed* books than from his own; because, not having the same opportunity of reviewing them, he read them with more care.

11. Some books, like some fields, afford plenty of provision for various creatures—while, as to others,

—Jejuna quidem clivosi glarea ruris
Vix humiles *apibus* casias roremque ministrat:
Et tophus scaber, et nigris exesa chelydris
Creta, negant alios æque serpentibus agros
Dulcem ferre cibum, et curvas præbere latebras.
GEORG. ii. 212

The coarse lean gravel, on the mountain sides,
Scarce dewy bev'rage for the bees provides:
Nor chalk, nor crumbling stones, the food of snakes,
That work in hollow earth their winding tracks.
DRYDEN, 293.

12. The Biographia Britannica, a work which, notwithstanding its singular merit, I cannot help calling Vindicatio Britannica, or a defence of *every body*. Royal and Noble Authors, ii. 68.

13. Voltaire's Universal History, a charming bird's-eye landscape, where one views the whole in picturesque confusion, and imagines the objects more delightful than they are in reality, and when examined separately. Ibid. 87.

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14. By the writers of dialogues matters are often contrived, as in the combats of the Emperor Commodus in his gladiatorial capacity. The antagonist of his imperial majesty was allowed only a *leaden* weapon.

15. It is said of Ascham, that "he lost no time in the perusal of mean and unprofitable books." See the reflection on it in Biog. Br. 2d edit.

16. "Fronti nulla fides" is a just maxim—otherwise, one should be prejudiced against a book with this title—Fog Theologiæ Speculativæ Schema.

17. "To read while eating was always my fancy, in default of a tête-á-tête. 'Tis the supplement to society I want. I alternately devour a page and a piece: 'tis as if my book dined with me." Rousseau, b. 6, vol. ii. p. 137.

18. Genuine knowledge should be diffused. "Quid magni faceres," said Archbishop Warham to Erasmus, "si uno agresti popello predicâris? Nunc libris tuis omnes doces pastores, fructu longé uberiore." Cooper's Charge, p. 22.—"What great work could you have wrought, had your preaching been confined to one small and rustic flock? But now, with much more extensive benefit, your books instruct the shepherds of all other flocks."

BRACHMANS AND ALEXANDER.

Great indeed was the stateliness of the Brachmans! When Alexander expressed a desire to converse with them, he was told, these philosophers made no visits; if he wanted to see them, he must go to their houses. The tradition of a fall and restoration was strong among them.

BRIBERY.

The Spartans were the only people that for a while seemed to disdain the love of money; but, the contagion still spreading, even they, at last, yielded to its allurements; and every man sought private emoluments, without attending to the good of his country. —"That which has been is that which shall be!"

OF BUYING BOOKS.

Young men should not be discouraged from buying books. Much may depend on it. It is said of Whiston, that the accidental purchase of Tacquet's Euclid at an auction, first occasioned his application to mathematical studies.—Biog. Dict. Art. Whiston.

CATHARINE I. OF RUSSIA.

She was not very brilliant and quick in her understanding; but the reason why the Czar was so fond of her, was her exceeding good temper: she never was seen peevish or out of humor; obliging and civil to all, and never forgetful of her former condition.—Coxe, i. 568, from Gordon.—Peter was subject to occasional horrors, which at times rendered him gloomy and suspicious, and raised his passions to such a height as to produce a temporary madness. In these dreadful moments Catharine was the only person who ventured to approach him; and such was the kind of fascination she had acquired over him, that her presence had an instantaneous effect, and the first sound of her voice composed his mind and calmed his agonies. From these circumstances she seemed necessary, not only to his comfort, but to his very existence: she became his inseparable companion on his journeys into foreign countries, and even in all his military expeditions. —P. 554.

CHARACTERS AND ACTIONS OF REMARKABLE PERSONS.

1. It will be hereafter with a wicked man, when he is punished for his sins, as it was with Apollodorus, when he dreamed that he was flayed and boiled by the Scythians, and his *heart* spoke to him out of the cauldron, "Εγω σοι τουτων αιτια.—I am the cause of these thy sufferings."

2. Lysimachus, for extreme thirst, offered his kingdom to the Getæ, to quench it. His exclamation, when he had drank, is wonderfully striking—"Ah! wretched me! who, for such a momentary gratification, have lost so great a kingdom! φευ της εμης κακιας, ος, δι ηδονην ατω βαρειαν, εστερημαι βασιλειας τηλικαυτης."—How applicable is this to the case of him, who, for the *momentary* pleasures of sin, parts with the *kingdom* of heaven!

3. Horticulture, as it was the primitive employment of man, so it is what great geniuses, after having passed through the busiest scenes in the political and military world, retire to with pleasure towards the close of their days.—See Sir W. Temple's Gardens of Epicurus.

4. A truly great genius doth not think it beneath him to attend to little things. When Paulus Emilius, after his conquest of Macedon, entertained the principal men of Greece, he showed that he understood the ordering and placing of his guests, and how every man should be received according to his rank and quality, to such an exact nicety, that the Greeks were surprised to find him so expert and careful even about trifles, and that a man engaged in so many weighty affairs should observe a decorum in such little matters. He told them, the same spirit

was required in marshaling a banquet as an army. See Plutarch.

5. The same Paulus Emilius, when he had followed to the grave two of the best of sons, one a few days before his triumph, the other a few days after it, told a convention of the Romans, that, after such a tide of success, he had feared a reverse of fortune either to them or himself; that he now felt his mind perfectly at rest, as, by the stroke falling on him and his family, he looked upon his country to be safe.—There is a generosity and greatness of soul in this behavior not easy to be paralleled, as it came from a heart, says Plutarch, truly sincere, and free from all artifice.

6. It is finely observed by Plutarch, that, "as that body is most strong and healthful which can best support extreme cold and excessive heat, in the change of seasons; and that mind the strongest and firmest which can best bear prosperity and adversity, and the change from one to the other; so the virtue of Emilius was eminently seen, in that his countenance and carriage were the same upon the loss of two beloved sons, as when he had achieved his greatest victories and triumphs."—How doth this example reproach and shame the weakness and inconstancy of Christians!

7. The old proverb, *Mocking is catching*, was remarkably exemplified in the great Mr. Boyle; who, when yonng, by imitating stuttering children, acquired himself a habit of stuttering, of which he was never after perfectly cured.

8. Lord Orrery (Dr. Bentley's antagonist) was fond of two sorts of company. He either improved himself by conversing with men of real genius and learning; or else diverted himself with those in whose composition there was a mixture of the odd and ridiculous: the foibles of such he would touch and play off with a delicacy and tenderness that prevented any offence from being taken even by the parties themselves, who enjoyed the humor, and joined in the laugh as heartily as the rest of the company.

9. The day after Charles V. (one of the wisest as well as most fortunate of princes) had resigned all his kingdoms to his son Philip, he introduced, and recommended to his service, his faithful counsellor and secretary, with these remarkable words: "The present I make you to-day is a far more valuable one than that I made you yesterday."

10. I am ashamed to think, that a little business and few cares should indispose and hinder me in my religious exercises, when I read, that Frederic, king of Prussia, at a time when all his enemies were upon him, and his affairs seemed absolutely desperate, found leisure to write a kind of philosophical testament in French verse. See Age of Louis XV. ii. 213.

11. Children should be inured as early as possible to acts of charity and mercy. Constantine, as soon as his son could write, employed *his* hand in signing pardons, and delighted in conveying through *his* mouth all the favors that he granted. A noble introduction to sovereignty, which is instituted for the happiness of mankind.—Jortin's Remarks on Ecclesiastical History.

12. Cyrus had taken the wife of Tigranes, and asked him what he would give to save her from servitude? He replied, all that he had in the world, and his own life into the bargain. Cyrus, upon this, very generously restored her, and pardoned what had passed. All were full of his praises upon this occasion, some commending the accomplishments of his mind, others those of his person. Tigranes asked his wife whether she did not greatly admire him? "I never looked at him," said she. "Not look at him!" returned he; "upon whom then did you look?" "Upon him," replied she, "who offered his own life to redeem me from slavery."—This charming example should be copied into our behavior in the house of God; where we should behold and contemplate the beauties and perfections of that blessed Person alone, who actually did give his life a ransom for us.—See Xenoph. Cyropæd. iii. 147.

13. When Constantine was instigated by his courtiers to make examples of the Arians, who had insulted his statues, he silenced them by raising his hand to his face, and saying, "For mine own part, I do not feel myself hurt."

14. Would you see human vanity and misery at the highest? Behold the globe of the world carried in procession before the corpse of the Emperor Charles VII. who, during the short course of his wretched reign, could not keep possession of one small unfortunate province.

15. Victor Amadeus, tired of business and of himself, capriciously abdicating his crown, and a year afterwards as capriciously repenting, and desiring to have it again, displayed fully the weakness of human nature, and how difficult it is to gratify the heart, either with or without a throne.

16. Claude Lorrain studied his art in the open field, where he frequently continued from the rising to the setting sun. He sketched whatever he thought beautiful or striking, and marked, in similar colors, every curious

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tinge of light on all kinds of objects. These were afterwards improved into landscapes, universally allowed to be superior to those of all other artists who have painted in the same style. In like manner Shakspere and Ben Jonson travelled and associated with all sorts of people, to mark different *traits* in the characters and tempers of mankind, which were afterwards worked up into their inimitable plays. Every writer should follow these examples, and take down thoughts as they occur in reading or conversing, to be ready for use afterwards when he sits down to compose.

17. To the hasty correctors of the *sacred* text may be applied what an ingenious author has observed, when speaking of the critics on *classical* writers.—"The learning of the ancients had been long ago obliterated, had every man thought himself at liberty to corrupt the lines which he did not understand." Adventurer, vol. ii. p. 189. No. 58.

18. Obscurity of expression is elegantly called, by Mrs. Montague, "that *mist* common to the *eve* and *morn* of literature, which in fact proves it is not at its high meridian." See Essay on Shakspere, p. 286.

19. Some make the discharge of the Christian ministry to consist in asserting the rights of the church, and the dignity of their function; others, in a strenuous opposition to the prevailing sectaries, and a zealous attachment to the established church government; a third sort, in examining the speculative points and mystical parts of religion; few, in the meantime, considering either in what the true dignity of the ministerial character consists; or the only end for which church government was at all established; or the practical influence, which can alone make speculative points worth our attention—the reformation of the lives of men, and the promotion of their truest happiness here and hereafter. Gilpin's Life, p. 160.

20. It is observed of King, Bishop of London, in 1611, that he was so constant in preaching, after he was a bishop, that he never missed a Sunday when his health permitted. Biog. Dict. from Fuller.

21. The morning after the massacre of Paris, when the streets were covered with the bodies of slaughtered men, women, and children, before they were thrown into the Seine, the Catholics bethought themselves of a *charitable* device, which was, to strip them naked, in order to distribute their bloody clothes *to the poor!*—Saint Foix, Histoire de l'Ordre du S. Esprit.

22. To the soul confined in this material world, but aspiring to another and a better, apply the following lines:

——————Pent in his cage
Th' imprison'd eagle sits, and beats his bars;
His eye is rais'd to heav'n. Though many a moon
Has seen him pine in sad captivity—
——————still he thirsts to dip
His daring pinions in the fount of light.
Poetical Epistle to Anstey, on the Eng. Poets.

23. In treating of the human mind, and the management of it, the two great sources of illustration are *agriculture* and *medicine*. —Bacon's Advancement of Learning, vii. 3.—Our Saviour therefore so frequently applied to them (as the prophets had done before) for the illustration of his doctrine.

24. Champagne, a celebrated painter, was given to understand, he might have anything from Cardinal Richelieu, if he would leave the service of the queen mother—"Why," said he, "if the cardinal could make me a better painter, the only thing I am ambitious of, it would be something; but since that is impossible, the only honor I beg of his eminency is the continuance of his good graces."

25. It was a saying of Lord Clarendon's father, that he never knew a man arrive to any degree of reputation in the world who chose for his friends and companions persons in their qualities inferior, or in their parts not much superior to himself. And Huetius, I think, tells us, that as often as he heard of any one of very eminent character in the republic of letters, he never rested till, by some means or other, he had obtained an introduction to his acquaintance, and this from his earliest youth.

26. It happened formerly that a Rotterdam produced an Erasmus. And it happened lately, as the General Evening Post (March 14, 1771,) informs us, that a goose hatched four-and-twenty canary birds. But these are events that do not happen every day.

27. When the Mexican Emperor Gatimozin was put upon the rack by the soldiers of Cortes, one of his nobles, who lay in tortures at the same time, complained piteously to his sovereign of the pain he endured. "Do you think," said Gatimozin, "that I lie upon roses?" The nobleman ceased moaning, and expired in silence.—When a Christian thinks his sufferings for sin, in sickness, pain, &c., intolerable, let him remember those of *his* Lord, endured patiently on that bed of sorrow, the *cross*; and he will think so no longer.

28. When Gatimozin, just taken, was brought into the presence of Cortes, he (Cortes) gave strict orders that the Mexican noblemen taken with the emperor should be secured and strictly looked to, lest they should escape. "Your care," said Gatimo-

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zin, "is needless; they will not fly; they are come to die at the feet of their sovereign!" —Such should be the disposition and resolution of the disciples and soldiers of Christ.

29. Little circumstances convey the most characteristic ideas; but the choice of them may as often paint the genius of the writer, as of the person represented.—Well exemplified in the instance of the Duchess of Marlborough.—See Royal and Noble Authors, vol. ii. 200.

30. Inscription (not perfectly Augustan) on the Earl of Shrewsbury's sword: "Sum Talboti, pro occidere inimicos."—"I am Talbot's, for to slay his foes."

31. Wraxall, speaking of a cathedral, or abbey, in Livonia, demolished by the Russians, expresses himself thus:—"Posterity will see the standard wave where the crucifix has stood, and the matin bell will be succeeded by the trumpet."—P. 278.

32. In former times, when Lord Keeper North applied close to his studies, and spent his days in his chamber, he was subject to the spleen, and apprehensive of many imaginary diseases; and, by way of prevention, he went thick clad, wore leather skull-caps, and inclined much to physic. But now, when he was made attorney-general, and business flowed in upon him, his complaints vanished, and his skull-caps were destined to lie in a drawer, and receive his money.—Life of Lord Keeper North.

33. As men are preferred, their zeal and diligence often remit, instead of increasing. Urban III. thus inscribed a letter to Archbishop Baldwin—"Monacho *ferventissimo*, Abbati *calido*, Episcopo *tepido*, Archiepiscopo *remisso*."—"*Most fervent* as a Monk, *warm* as an Abbot, *lukewarm* as a Bishop, *cold* as an Archbishop."—Life of Baldwin in Biog. Britan.

34. To *instruct*, and to *govern*, are two things; and a man may do the former well, who does the latter very indifferently. It is part of Dr. Allestry's character, as drawn in his epitaph: "Episcopales infulas eâdem industriâ evitavit, quâ alii ambiunt; cui rectius visum ecclesiam *defendere*, *instruere*, *ornare*, quam *regere*."—He shunned the mitre as industriously as others seek it; he chose rather to *defend*, *edify*, and *adorn*, than *govern* the church."—Biog. Brit.

35. Bishop Andrews, when a lad at the university, used every year to visit his friends in London, and to stay a month with them. During that month, he constantly made it a rule to learn, by the help of a master, some language, or art, to which he was before a stranger. No time was lost.

36. When the same eminent person first became Bishop of Winton, a distant relation, a blacksmith, applied to him to be *made a gentleman*, i. e. to be ordained, and provided with a good benefice. No said the bishop, you shall have the best *forge* in the county; but—*every man in his own order and station.*

37. It was a good rule of Dr. Hammond's always to have a subject in hand; in which case he observed, that, whatever course of reading he happened to be in, he never failed of meeting with something to his purpose. For this reason, no sooner had he finished one sermon, or tract, but he immediately put another upon the stocks. Thus he was never idle, and all his studies turned to present account. He never walked out alone without a book, and one always lay open in his chamber, from which his servant read while he dressed or undressed himself. His Life by Fell, though written in a style far from clear and agreeable, is one of the most improving books I ever read.

38. Jordano (Luca) the painter was so engaged in his business, that he worked at it even on holidays. Being reproached for this by a brother artist—"Why," said he, "if I was to let my pencils rest, they would grow rebellious, and I should not be able to bring them to order, without trampling on them."—This man had so happy a memory, that he recollected the manner of all the great masters, and had the art of imitating them so well as to occasion frequent mistakes.

39. Grove, the Presbyterian, published in 1728 a funeral sermon on the Fear of Death. The subject was treated in so masterly a manner, that a person of considerable rank in the learned world declared, that, after reading it, he could have laid down and died, with as much readiness and satisfaction, as he had ever done anything in his life.—Biog. Dict. Art. *Grove*.—The sermon must have been a good one to have wrought such a persuasion: but how the persuasion would have kept its ground, had the person been taken at his word, and ordered to prepare for instant death, is another question.

40. Remarkable is the following passage of Josephus, relative to the wickedness of his countrymen before Jerusalem was besieged by the Romans—"That time abounded with all manner of iniquity, so that none was left undone. Yea, though one endeavored to invent some new villany, yet could he invent none that was not then practised."

41. Sauveur, the French mathematician when he was about to court his mistress would not see her till he had been with a notary, to have the conditions on which he

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intended to insist reduced into a written form; for fear the sight of her should not leave him enough master of himself. Like a true mathematician, he proceeded by rule and line, and made his calculations when his head was cool.

42. Alexander sent Phocion 100 talents. "Why to me, more than others?"—"Because he looks upon you as the only just and virtuous man."—Then let him suffer me to continue so."—Philip before had offered him a large sum. He was pressed to take it, if not for himself, yet for his children. "If my children," cried Phocion, "resemble me, the little spot of ground, with the produce of which I have hitherto lived, and which has raised me to the glory you mention, will be sufficient to maintain them. If it will not, I do not intend to leave them wealth, merely to stimulate and heighten their luxury."

CHARITY.

1. In the world, no man liveth or worketh for himself alone; but every tradesman, mechanic, husbandman, &c. contributeth his labor and his skill towards supplying the different exigencies of the public, and rendering society comfortable. So ought it to be among Christians in the church, which is a body composed of many members, and requireth that each member should perform its proper office for the benefit of the whole.

2. Among the ancient Romans there was a law kept inviolably, that no man should make a public feast, except he had before provided for all the poor of his neighborhood. —So the Gospel—"Thou, when thou makest a feast, call the poor," &c.—See Rule of Life, 166.

3. Let him, who has not leisure or ability to penetrate the mysteries of the SS. take comfort in this saying of Austin: "Ille tenet et quod patet et quod latet in divinis sermonibus, qui charitatem tenet in moribus."—"He is master of all that is plain, and all that is mysterious in the Scriptures, who is possessed of the virtue of charity."

4. The end of knowledge is charity, or the communication of it for the benefit of others. This truth may be finely illustrated by a passage in Milton. P. L. viii. 90 et seq.

> ——————Consider first, that great
> Or bright infers not excellence: the earth,
> Though, in comparison of heav'n, so small,
> Nor glist'ring, may of solid good contain
> More plenty than the sun that barren shines;
> *Whose virtue on itself works no effect,*
> *But in the fruitful earth; there first receiv'd*
> *His beams, unactive else, their vigor find*

5. It is very remarkable, that Chesterfield, that man of the world, that man of pleasure, places charity to the distressed at the head of rational pleasures.—See the Letter on Expenses, vol. ii. 800.

6. There is no state of life, which does not furnish employment for care and industry: the mean must serve the great out of necessity; and the great are equally bound to serve the mean out of justice and charity.—Heylyn, ii. 325.

7. At man's first creation, charity was the divine principle implanted in his heart by his Maker. The adversary, by temptation, displaced it, and left self-love in its room, which was cherished by man, to the destruction of himself and his posterity. Thus a certain mischievous bird repairs to the nest of one that is harmless, and having devoured the eggs of the little innocent owner, lays one of her own in their place: this the fond foolish bird hatches with great assiduity, and, when excluded, finds no difference in the great ill-looking changling from her own. To supply this voracious creature, the credulous nurse toils with unusual labor, no way sensible that she is feeding an enemy to her race, and one of the most destructive robbers of her future progeny.—See Goldsmith, v. 264.

8. It is not easy to conceive, how much sin and scandal is occasioned by a severe quarrelsome temper in the disciples of Christ. It stirs up the corruptions of those with whom they contend; and leads others to think meanly of a profession which has so little efficacy to soften and sweeten the tempers of those who maintain it. Doddridge, Fam. Expos. ii. 186.

9. Bees never work singly, but always in companies, that they may assist each other. A useful hint to scholars and Christians.

10. An Abbé, remarkable for his parsimony, happened to be in company where a charitable subscription was going round. The plate was brought to him, and he contributed his louis-d'or. The collector, not observing it, came to him a second time. *I have put in*, said he. *If you say so, I will believe you*, returned the collector, *though I did not see it.—I did see it*, cried old Fontenelle, who was present, *but did not believe it.*

11. There are many deceptions concerning charity. 1. It may be practised on false motives; interest, custom, fear, shame, vanity, popularity, &c. 2. It is a mistake to imagine it will atone for a want of other virtues, or for a life of vice and dissipation.—See Dupré, Serm. iii. Crit. Review, April 1782, p. 260.—Mr. Law's character of *Negotius*. Voltaire says, "the effect is the same, whatever be the motive." But surely

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the worth of every action must be estimated by the motive on which it is performed. He who attends me when I am sick, with a view to the making of my will, and getting my estate, is a very different man from him who does it only because he loves me. Yet the effect may be the same: I may be equally taken taken care of in either case. We are to be judged by one who knows the thoughts of our hearts, and will judge us accordingly. Charity made consistent with vice—Brown's Sermons, 278.——See Charity well described under the idea of Generosity, Fitzosborne's Letters, 123.

12. Mickle, the translator of the Lusiad, inserted in his poem an angry note against Garrick, who, as he thought, had used him ill, by rejecting a tragedy of his. Some time afterwards, the poet, who had never seen Garrick play, was asked by a friend in town to go to King Lear. He went, and, during the first three acts, said not a word. In a fine passage of the fourth, he fetched a deep sigh, and, turning to his friend, "I wish," said he, "the *note* was out of my book!" How often, alas! do we say and write bitter things of a man, on a partial and interested view of his character, which, if we knew it throughout, we should wish unsaid or unwritten!

CHINESE.

1. It is an odd circumstance, that when a man dies, among the Chinese, the relations and friends wait *three days*, to see whether he will rise again, before they put the corpse into the coffin. Voyages and Travels, iv. 92, from Navarette. We are told, from the same author, that many in that country, in their life-time, get their coffin made, and give a treat to their acquaintance on the day it comes home. It is customary for the emperor, in particular, to have his coffin some time with him in the palace. Many keep it in sight for several years, and now and then go into it. Ibid.

2. It should be in a university, as in the empire of China, where "no husbandman is ever idle, and no land ever lies fallow." Ibid. 121.

3. Accomplishments of every kind are acquired and preserved by use and practice; and the scholar and Christian would do well to reflect upon a piece of discipline in the Chinese armies, by which a soldier who suffers his arms to contract the least *rust* is punished on the spot with thirty or forty blows of the batoon. Ibid. 286, from Le Compte, and Duhalde—313, 216.

——Sulco attritus splendescere vomer,
GEORG. i. 46.

Worn in the furrow shines the burnish'd share.
DRYDEN.

4. In China, the aspirants, in a literary way, are examined by the eminent men, for their degrees. The Emperor Kang Hi, finding matters did not go on as they should do, took it into his head one day, to examine the examiners, and sent several of the old dons packing into the provinces, for insufficiency. "The dread of such another examination," says our author, "keeps those chiefs of the literati close to their studies."

CHRISTIANITY.

1. With difficulty men are induced to give up their favorite opinions: still harder is the task to draw them from their favorite vices. Could a religion be less than divine, which caused the Heathen world to quit both?

2. "Religion," say some, "was invented by priests and politicians, to keep the world in order." It is a good thing, then, for that purpose at least. But the misfortune is, none of the supposed impostors of this kind have ever been named, who lived till *after* the general principles of religion were found disseminated among mankind, as the learned Stillingfleet shows at large (Orig. Sac. b. i. chap. 1,) even from the testimonies of the Egyptians and Greeks themselves.

3. The differences among Christians, about lesser matters prove the truth of those great and fundamental points in which they all agree.

4. The little effect which Christianity hath on the lives of its professors, is frequently made an argument against it. So with regard to philosophy, the same objection is thus put and answered in Cicero's Tusc. Quest. lib. ii. sect. 5.—*A. Nonne verendum est igitur, ne philosophiam falsâ gloriâ exornes? Quod est enim majus argumentum, nihil eam prodesse, quam quosdam perfectos philosophos turpiter vivere? M. Nullum verò id quidem argumentum est. Nam ut agri non omnes frugiferi sunt qui coluntur, sic animi non omnes culti fructum ferunt. Atque ut ager quamvis fertilis sine culturâ fructuosus esse non* potest, *sic sine doctrinâ animus: ita est utraque res sine alterâ debilis.* See Lactant. De fals. Sap. vol. iv. 226.

A. Is it not then to be feared, that you ascribe to philosophy a glory that does not belong to it? For what can afford a stronger argument of its inefficacy, than the vicious lives of some of its most learned professors? *M.* That argument is not conclusive. For as agriculture cannot render all soils fruitful, so neither are all minds equally improved by

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instruction. Yet neither can any soil, nor any mind, bring forth good fruits by the unassisted force of its natural fertility; but both must remain unproductive without the aid of cultivation.

5. In Constantinople behold the judgments of God on apostates from true religion, and corrupters of it: see Jews and Christians perpetrating on each other the most enormous villanies, as the price of obtaining the favor of the Turks! At the same time behold the Greek prelates, even while groaning under the yoke of the oppressor, employing their time, their wealth, and their interest, in over-reaching and supplanting each other for a metropolitan see, or a patriarchate, at the court of that oppressor!

6. Christianity has, in every age, produced good effects on thousands and tens of thousands, whose lives are not recorded in ecclesiastical history; which, like other history, is for the most part a register of the vices, the follies, and the quarrels of those who made a figure and a noise in the world. Socrates, in the close of his work, observes, that, if men were honest and peaceable, historians would be undone for want of materials.—Jortin's Remarks, b. ii. ad fin.

7. Theft was unknown among the Caribbees, till Europeans came among them. When they lost anything, they said innocently—"The Christians have been here!"

CHURCH.

1. The enemies of the church are encouraged to proceed in their attacks by the timidity of her friends; as Lysander, at the siege of Corinth, bade his men be of good courage, when he saw a hare run along upon the walls.

2. Learned and good men are often deterred from engaging the adversaries of religion, more through fear of their ribaldry than their arguments; as Antipater's elephants, which beheld the apparatus of war unmoved, ran away at the grunting of the Megarensian hogs.

3. To admit all the jarring sects and opinions into the church by a *comprehension*, would be, as one well observes, to jumble together an indigested heap of contrarieties into the same mass, and to make the *old chaos* the plan of the *new reformation*.

4. Those clergymen, who betray the cause of their master, in order to be promoted in his church, are guilty of the worst kind of simony, and pay their souls for the purchase of their preferments.

5. Heresies seem, like comets, to have their periodical returns.

6. Some think variety of religions as pleasing to God as variety of flowers. Now there can be but one religion which is true; and the God of truth cannot be pleased with falsehood, for the sake of variety.

7. Nothing is more common than for a religious or political sect to disclaim a principle, and then resume it under another form: as the *Circoncelliones* used no *swords*, because God had forbidden the use of one to St. Peter; but they were armed with clubs, which they called the clubs of Israel, and with which they could break all the bones in a man's skin. See Le Beau, i. 170. See Jortin's Remarks on Eccl. Hist. iv. 388.

8. The heat and acrimony with which some men write against revelation remind one of the cruelties practised by the abovementioned fanatics, who covered the eyes of the catholics that fell into their hands with *lime* diluted with *vinegar*. Ibid.

9. Apply to quarrels among Christians the following lines, addressed by Adam to Eve, after their mutual accusations and upbraidings:

> But rise; let us no more contend, nor blame
> Each other, blamed enough elsewhere; but strive,
> In offices of love, how we may lighten
> Each other's burden in our share of woe.

10. Upon viewing many of our places of worship in the country, one would be tempted to think the church of England had adopted the maxim laid down in a neighboring kingdom, "That cleanliness is not essential to devotion." A church of England lady once offered to attend the kirk there, if she might be permitted to have the pew swept and lined. "The pew swept and lined!" said Mess John's wife, "my husband would think it downright popery."

11. If the intended reformation of our liturgy goes on, the reformers may hereafter bring us in a bill like that of the Cirencester painter:

> Mr. Charles Terebee to Joseph Cook, debtor.
> To mending the Commandments, altering the } *l. s. d.*
> Belief, and making a new Lord's Prayer, } 1 1 0

12. It is a principle advanced by president Montesquieu, that, where the magistrate is satisfied with the established religion, he ought to repress the direct attempts towards innovation, and only grant a toleration to other sects.—B. xxv. ch. 10.—See Hume, vol. vii. p. 40 and 41.

13. Sir Matthew Hale used to say, "Those of the separation were good men, but they had narrow souls, or they would not break the peace of the church about such inconsiderable matters, as the points in difference were."

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14. Lord Clarendon, somewhere in his Life, makes this severe reflection—"That clergymen understand the least, and take the worst measure of human affairs, of all mankind that can read and write." Cited by Temple, in his Essay on the Clergy, p. 22. See his last chapter, On the service clergymen may do their country in matters civil and temporal.—The reason of the abovementioned circumstance it might be curious to investigate.

15. The person presiding over a church should diligently mark the very first starting of an error, or heresy, and employ a proper hand immediately to check and extinguish it; as, by order of the New River Company in London, a watchman is nightly fixed at such a height, near the river head, as to be able to overlook the whole town, and, on the momentary appearance of any conflagration, to turn the water full on the mains leading so the respective quarter, however remote the situation: by which wise and commendable measure, the water generally arrives at the place of destination before the fleetest messenger.—Morning Chronicle, Jan. 27, 1781.

16. "As I do not check any suspicions in my own mind, I shall not easily be restrained from uttering them, because *I know not how I shall benefit my country, or assist her counsels, by silent meditations.*"—Pulteney, in Johnson's Debates, vol. i. p. 5. A friend of the *church*, who is able to write or speak, in these days, should make the same reflections.

17. A right good man may be a very unfit magistrate: and, for discharge of a bishop's office, to be well minded is not enough; no, not to be well learned also. Skill to instruct is a thing necessary, skill to govern much more necessary in a bishop. It is not safe for the church of Christ, when bishops learn what belongeth unto government as empirics learn physic, by killing of the sick. Bishops were wont to be men of great learning in the laws both civil and of the church; and while they were so, the wisest men in the land for counsel and government were bishops.—Hooker, vii. 24. p. 398.

COLLINS (ANTHONY.)

This person, on his death-bed, was under great anxiety, and, just before he expired, with a deep sigh pronounced the following words—*Locke has ruined me!* His niece, who attended him at the time, related this circumstance to Mr. Wogan, the pious author of an Essay on the Proper Lessons; as he assured a friend of mine, the Rev. Dr. Merrick of St. Ann's, Soho.

COMPOSITION.

1. Distension in the bowels is a sign of a bad digestion. In an author it is a symptom of the same infirmity.

2. If a man's studies are dry, his compositions will be insipid. Distil a bone, and you will have a quantity of water.

3. He that would write well in any tongue must follow this counsel of Aristotle;—to think with the learned, but speak with the common people, that these may understand, and those approve him.—Ascham, p. 57.

4. Aptness, knowledge, and use make all things perfect; but they must join forces, or nothing will be well done. The first is the gift of God; the second we must have from others; the third we attain by our own diligence and labor.—P. 117.

5. The same arguments are quite different in their effects, when drawn up and urged by a man of genius. They go farther, and pierce deeper, like the shafts of Hercules, which, Hesiod tells us, were winged with eagles' feathers.

6. He who would excel in anything (oratory, *e. g.*) must not servilely copy any one orator throughout, but from different persons select the accomplishments for which they are severally eminent.

7. It was Cicero's opinion, that he who would speak well, must write much:

Caput autem est, quod (ut verè dicam) minime facimus (est enim magni laboris, quem plerique fugimus,) quàm plurimùm scribere.—De Orat.—But the principal point is one from which most of us shrink, on account of the labor that attends it; I mean frequent and much composition.

8. Depth of sentiment, illustrated by a bright imagination, is like the sea when the sun shines upon it and turns it into an ocean of light.

9. Illustrations are peculiarly beautiful, where they are fetched from something near akin to the subject which they are employed to adorn: as *e. g.* Sprat's observations on the age of learning among the Arabians—"Methinks that small spot of civil arts, compared to their long course of ignorance before and after, bears some resemblance with the country itself; where there are some few little valleys, and wells, and pleasant shades of palm-trees; but those lying in the midst of deserts and unpassable tracts of sand." Hist. of Roy. Soc. p. 45.

10. Zeuxis, the famous painter, before he sat down to a picture, used to animate his fancy by reading some passage in Homer relative to his subject.—A good hint to those who are about to compose in prose and verse.

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11. Every man has a certain manner and character in writing and speaking, which he spoils and loses by a too close and servile imitation of another; as Bishop Felton, an imitator of Bishop Andrews, observed—"I had almost marred my own natural trot, by endeavoring to imitate his artificial amble."—Wanley, 647.

12. It was a rule with Archbishop Williams, to give himself some recreation before he sat down to compose, and that in proportion to the importance of the composition.—See his Life in Lloyd's Worthies, p. 379.—Dr. H. More, after finishing one of his most laborious and painful works exclaimed—"Now, for these three months, I will neither think a wise thought, nor speak a wise word, nor do an ill thing."—Life in the Biog. Dict.

13. In an oration, one would wish that the whole should be well composed, and suitable to the dignity of the subject. But let the progress to what is great and brilliant be gentle and gradual. Such is the rule and method of nature in all her works. At the first dawning of the brightest day that ever shone, light and darkness were scarcely distinguishable.—Lawson, 380.

14. In compositions, young writers produce the most, but old ones the best, as Lord Bacon observes of grapes.—"The vine beareth more grapes when it is young, but grapes that make better wine when it is old; for that the juice is better concocted."

15. Style should resemble the atmosphere of Italy, which "embellishes all objects by showing them with clearness; for which reason, its gulfs, its woods, its cascades, and its meads, have a grace unknown beneath other skies." M. Sherlock's Letters, p. 21.

16. The author of Hudibras had a common-place book, in which he had reposited, not such events or precepts as are gathered by reading; but such remarks, similitudes, allusions, assemblages, or inferences, as occasion prompted, or meditation produced; those thoughts that were generated in his own mind, and might be usefully applied to some future purpose. Such is the labor of those who write for immortality. Johnson, i. 288.

17. Augustus loved correctness and accuracy in all his compositions, and never delivered his mind on any serious matter, even in his own family, without memorials or written notes. Ferguson, Rom. Hist.—A method practised and recommended by Bolingbroke and Chesterfield, to attain a habit of correctness in speaking.—So Bishop Atterbury of *writing*, "Let nothing, though of a trifling nature, pass through your pen negligently." Letters, i. 118.

CONSCIENCE.

1. A man reproached with a crime of which he knows himself to be innocent, should feel no more uneasiness than if he was said to be ill when he felt himself in perfect health.

2. When Cleomenes was on the point of taking a bribe from Aristagoras, his virtue was preserved by his daughter, a child of *nine years old*, who exclaimed, "Fly, father, or this stranger will corrupt you."—Conscience will often perform this office for us, if we would attend to its admonitions.

3. The same power (conscience) should do for us, respecting our passions and appetites, what an attendant was ordered every day at dinner to do for Darius, after the burning of Sardis, respecting his enemies—cry out, *Remember the Athenians.*

CONTENTMENT.

1. When Christ bade us limit our cares to the day that is passing over us, he consulted our natural quiet no less than our spiritual welfare; since the chief sources of most men's uneasiness are chagrin at what is past, and forebodings of what is to come. Whereas, "what is past ought to give us no uneasiness, except that of repentance for our faults; and what is to come ought much less to affect us, because, with regard to us and our concerns, it is not, and perhaps never will be."

2. Plutarch, speaking of that inviolable friendship which subsisted between Pelopidas and Epaminondas, says, "The true and only cause of this excellent conduct was their virtue, which kept them, in all their actions, from aiming at *wealth* and *glory*, which fatal contentions are always attended with *envy;* but being both equally inflamed with a divine ardor to make their country prosperous and happy by their administration, they looked upon each other's success as their own."

3. In general, as he observes, among the Grecians, the personal enmity borne by great men of the same city to each other, exceeded that which they bore to the enemies of their country.—The same passions have operated in the same manner among Christians; of which we have a remarkable instance at the siege of Constantinople by Mahomet II. when such was the animosity subsisting between the Greeks and Latins, within the city, that one of the former declared, he had rather see a Turk's turban in Constantinople than a Cardinal's cap.

4. When old Dioclesian was called from his retreat and invited to resume the purple, which he had laid down some years before, "Ah! (said he) if you could see those fruits

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and herbs at Salona, which I cultivate with my own hands, you would never talk to me of empire.

CONVERSATION AND COMPANY.

1. Dr. Arbuthnot, in his book upon Aliment, tells us (p. 7), that, "in general, whatever be the state of the *tongue*, the same is that of the inward coat of the *stomach*." For which reason physicians look at one to discover the foulness of the other. What propriety is there in that axiom of our Lord, "Out of the abundance of the *heart* the *mouth* speaketh."

2. A man's *countenance* should be well watched by him who would know his mind; for, in spite of all endeavors, one will very often be the index of the other. See Collier on the Aspect: Essays, ii. 121.

3. A man's real sentiments often discover themselves by *words* spoken on a sudden, in drink, in anger, in pride, in grief.

4. The deepest designs are sometimes made manifest by *deeds* of kindness done, without a visible cause, to a man or to his dependants, secretly to gain him or them from him.

5. Wise and reserved men are best expounded by knowing the *ends* they have in view, as such work uniformly on a preconcerted plan; but weak and simple persons by their *natures*, because they do many things absurdly, and without reason; as one, who had been a Pope's nuncio in a certain kingdom, when, upon his return, his opinion was asked with regard to a successor, gave his advice, "That in any case his Holiness should *not* send one too wise; because," said he, "no wise man would ever imagine what they in that country were like to do."

6. You will best learn a man's weaknesses and faults from his enemies, his virtues and abilities from his friends, his hours and customs from his servants, his sentiments and opinions from his confidants.

7. It is expedient to have an acquaintance with those who have looked into the world, who know men, understand business, and can give good intelligence and good advice when they are wanted.

8. Knowledge is to be obtained from some men by being free and talkative, which provokes them to be so too; from others by reservedness and taciturnity, which induce them to trust and deposit their secrets with us.

9. In all conferences and negociations a watchful and present wit is necessary, to promote the main matter, and yet observe incidental circumstances, as Epictetus gives it in precept, that every philosopher should say to himself, "I will do this also, and yet go on in my course."

10. Of other men's affairs it may be sometimes useful to know much, but it is always necessary to say little.—The emptiest of all characters is a busybody:

Της ωολυπραγμοσυνης ουδεν κενεωτερον αλλο.

11. It is difficult to account for the choice which some men make of their companions. Lycas, the Peripatetic, had a goose that lived with him, walked with him, attended him upon all occasions, and, when it died, was buried as a brother, with burial *philosophic*.—See Ælian. de Animal. lib. vii. c. 36.

12. Great abilities and fine accomplishments are often concealed under the most unpromising appearance: as travellers have observed, that the mountains which contain within them mines of gold, silver, and precious stones, are generally barren.

13. Among the Athenians, the greatest festal pleasure consisted in a flow of learned, sprightly, and polite conversation, as agreeable, in a word, as useful and interesting. The banquet of Plato and that of Xenophon give us a model of the ordinary tabletalk of the Athenians; and it was thus that they prevented the two extremes of licentious mirth and irksome weariness, which preside but too often at most long meals. Goguet, xi. 225.

14. Compliments uttered *pro forma*, by those that hate one, bring to mind the ceremonies used in Spain, where a captain never corrects his soldier without first asking his leave, and the inquisition never burns a Jew without making an apology to him.

15. A man should be very well established in faith and virtue, who attempts to reclaim a witty and agreeable profligate: otherwise, he may become a convert instead of making one. Chapelle, a person of this character, was met one day in the street by his friend Boileau, who took the opportunity of mentioning to him his habit of drinking, and the consequences of it. Unfortunately, they were just by a tavern. Chapelle only desired they might step in there, and promised he would listen patiently and attentively. Boileau consented; and the event was, that, about one in the morning, they were carried home, dead drunk, and in separate coaches.

16. "I am no niggard according to my ability to impart what I know; but it is where I find some appetite: otherwise my most familiar friends, some of them, are as ignorant of my notions as any stranger; for, if they discover no stomach, I use not to examine them, no, not to offer them; and it would be in vain.—Pauci enim inviti discunt.

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Few learn against their will."—Mede, 811. So again, 815—"I am not unwilling to communicate to you most of my tow [material—from *tow* or *hemp*, for ropes,] because I perceive you make some account of them; for in the university where I live, I know not a second man that understands anything concerning such mysteries, or desires to be made acquainted with them."

17. I have somewhere met with an observation, that conversation, in the first part of the morning, is like a *dram;* it heats, and hurries, and muddles, and incapacitates for business, which should therefore be entered upon, previously to visiting and chit-chat, with a mind calm, and cool, und undisturbed. I believe this is true.

18. Never *speak*, but when you have something to *say*—"Wherefore shouldst thou run, seeing thou hast no tidings?"—See Bishop Butler's excellent Sermon on the *Tongue.*

COUNCIL.

1. What Gregory Nazianzen says of ecclesiastical Synods, in his tract *de Differentiis Vitæ*, is remarkable: "*Mihi certum est deliberatumque, nunquam posthac anserum aut gruum temerè inter se pugnantium synodis interresse.*"—On this point my resolution is fixed, never again to be present at synods of geese and cranes, employed solely in fighting with each other." And so Procopius, *Se nullius synodi felicem vidisse exitum*"—"That he had never seen good consequences result from a synod."

2. Wise men, when they meet together in numbers, sometimes make foolish determinations. Montesquieu, in his Persian letters, speaking of the quarrel of Ramus, which obliged the legislature of France to interpose, says—"It looks as if the heads of the greatest men *idiotized* when they meet together." Letter cix. The truth, perhaps, is, that interest, bashfulness, indolence, or some other cause, occasions men, who could give the best opinions, to withhold them, and yield to those of others more forward and domineering. See Jortin on the Various Motives by which the several members of an ecclesiastical council may happen to be actuated. Remarks on Eccl. Hist. ii. 185.

COURAGE OF DIFFERENT SORTS.

When Pelopidas was cited to be tried, that valor, which was haughty and intrepid in fight, forsook him before his judges. His air and discourse, timid and low, denoted a man who was afraid of death. Contrary behavior of Epaminondas.

CRITICISM LITERAL.

1. "I am almost tired of it," said Mr. Bryant to me, May 21, 1785. "It is often employed in removing little inequalities on the surface, when I want to have a *shaft* sunk, and the rich *ore* drawn forth from the mine within." He had been mentioning the new editions of Apollodorus, Virgil, &c., by the Germans, Heyne, &c.—May not the same observation be applied to *some* of the notes by Lowth, Blayney, and Newcome, on the SS. and to the *generality* of the various readings amassed by Kennicott?

2. Critics, by their severity, infest authors, as the African ants do the negroes; but like them answer one good purpose, by destroying all the carrion.

CUDWORTH.

His collections for the remaining part of his Intellectual System, and Daniel's Weeks, in 3 vols. folio, after many adventures and mutilations, were lodged in the British Museum.—See an account of this matter in Crit. Review for May, 1783, p. 391. Sold by Lord Masham, pillaged by Dodd as Locke's, and thrown into a garret by Davis. The fate of posthumous writings is treated by Johnson in one of his papers; whence he deduces an argument for a man's working up his materials, and publishing them himself; not *collecting* in infinitum, and then leaving those collections to be employed by the cook of his executor in singeing a goose.

DEATH.

1. There is something very affecting in the words spoken by the gallant Sir Philip Sidney to his brother, just before his death, occasioned by a wound received in battle—"Love my memory, cherish my friends; but, above all, govern your will and affections by the will and word of the Creator; in me beholding the end of this world, with all her vanities."

2. St. Aldegonde, a protestant in the Low Countries, when imprisoned under the duke of Alva, tells us, that "for three months together he recommended himself to God every night, as if that would be his last; the duke having twice ordered him to be put to death in prison."—Ought not every man to do this, as no man can be certain he shall awake on the morrow?—Gen. Dict.

3. In the journey of life, as in other journeys, it is a pleasing reflection, that we have friends who are thinking of us at home, and who will receive us with joy when our journey is at an end.

4. The learned Grotius, at the approach

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of death, would gladly have exchanged all his learning and honor for the plain integrity of one Jean Urick, a devout poor man, who spent eight hours of his time in devotion, eight in labor, eight in sleep and other refreshments."—"*Proh! Vitam perdidi operosè nihil agendo!*"—"Alas! I have wasted my time in being very busy and doing nothing!"—See Doddridge, Fam. Expos. sect. 14.

5. We often indulge a melancholy pleasure, in thinking that we shall be remembered and regretted after our death. How little is to be built on such imaginations, we may learn from the example of Queen Elizabeth, who, when she had closed a long and glorious reign with her life, "was in four days' time as much forgotten, as if she had never existed, by all the world, and even by her own servants."—See Carte's Hist. iii. 708.

6. When Gesner found his last hour approaching, he gave orders, to be carried into his *study*, that he might meet death in a place which had been most agreeable to him all his life.

7. When Mr. Paschal observed any of his friends to be afflicted at seeing the sickness and pain he underwent, he would say—"Do not be so concerned for me. Sickness is the natural state of a Christian, because by it we are what we ought always to be, in a state of suffering evils, mortified to the pleasures of sense, exempt from all those passions which work upon us as long as we live, free from ambition or avarice, and in a constant expectation of death. And is it not a great happiness to be by necessity in that state one ought to be in, and to have nothing else to do, but humbly and peaceably to submit to it?"—This is a noble, a just, a comfortable speculation.

8. It was a saying among the Brachmans, that our life ought to be considered as a state of *conception*, and death as a *birth* to a true and happy life.—This thought seems just, and capable, on the Christian plan, of being improved into a curious and useful speculation.—See Biograph. Dict. art. *Gymnosophists.*

9. When we rise fresh and vigorous in the morning, the world seems fresh too, and we think we shall never be tired of business or pleasure. But by that time the evening is come, we find ourselves heartily so; we quit all its enjoyments readily and gladly; we retire willingly into a little cell; we lie down in darkness, and resign ourselves to the arms of sleep, with perfect satisfaction and complacency.—Apply this to youth and old age, life and death.

10. Apply to the death of an afflicted Christian the beautiful lines of the poet, on the heartfelt pleasure of finding oneself at home, after a toilsome journey:

O quid solutis est beatius curis?
Quum mens onus reponit, ac *peregrino*
Labore fessi venimus larem ad nostrum,
Desideratoque acquiescimus lecto.—
Hoc est, quod unum est pro laboribus tantis.

11. Young, healthy, and strong as we may now be, yet a little while, and we shall become qualified to join the chorus of the Spartan old men:

Ἀμμες ὡσ' ημεν αλειμοι νεανιαι.

12. When sickness and sorrow come upon a Christian, and order him to prepare for death, he should be able to say, in the words of Æneas,

Nulla mihi nova nunc facies inopinaque surgit.
Omnia præcepi, atque animo mecum ante peregi.
ÆN. lib. vi. 104.

———No terror to my view,
No frightful face of danger, can be new.
Inur'd to suffer, and resolv'd to dare,
The fates, without my pow'r, shall be without my care. DRYDEN, 155.

13. Adeon' rem rediisse, ut, qui mihi consultum esse optumè velit, PATREM extimescam, ubi in mentem ejus ADVENTI venit? Quod ni fuissem incogitans, ita eum expectarem ut par fuit!—PHORM. act. i. sc. 3.

Is it come to this?
My father, Phædria!—my best friend!—that I
Should tremble, when I think of his return!
When, had I not been inconsiderate,
I, as 'tis meet, might have expected him!
COLMAN.

14. Cum tuba magna sonum dederit, cum venerit hora
Judicii, inter oves da mihi, Christe, locum.
Sis mihi, sis *Jesus*, ne me maledictio tangat;
Dulcis in aure sonet vox, "Benedicte, veni!"
DIETERIC. ii. 581.

15. A Christian may say of death, what Orestes, in Sophocles, says of the report of being dead:

Τι γαρ με λυπει τηδ' οτ' αν λογῳ θανων,
Εργοισι σωθω, κ' ξυνεγκωμαι κλεος;
ELECTRA, 59.

Why should this grieve me, that in words I die,
When I in deeds am sav'd, and by them rais'd
To glory? PORTER.

16. They who have done much, pride themselves in a short epitaph; they who have done little, in a long one.

17. The different ranks and orders of mankind may be compared to so many streams and rivers of running water. All proceed

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from an original small and obscure; some spread wider, travel over more countries, and make more noise in their passage, than others; but all tend alike to an ocean, where distinction ceases, and where the largest and most celebrated rivers are equally lost and absorbed with the smallest and most unknown streams.

18. Immatura peri; sed tu felicior annos
Vive tuos, conjux optime, vive meos.

I died untimely; happier doom be thine;
Live out thy years, dear husband! live out mine.

19. *On viewing the Deanry House, by Dr. Smith, late Dean of Chester.*

Within this pile of mould'ring stones
The dean hath laid his wearied bones;
In hope to end his days in quiet,
Exempt from nonsense, noise, and riot;
And pass, nor teas'd by fool nor knave,
From this still mansion to his grave.
Such there, like richer men's, his lot
To be in four days' time forgot.
See his Poetic Works and Life.

20. It is an evil disposition in some men to revile and publish the faults of those who are no longer alive to answer for themselves. It is the disposition of vultures, jackalls, and hyenas, who prey upon carcasses, and root up the dead.

DESPAIR.

The most tremendous circumstance recorded of that most dreadful scourge, the plague of Athens, is that the instant a person was seized he was struck with despair, which quite disabled him from attempting his cure.

DEVOTION.

1. He who seldom thinks of heaven is not likely to get thither; as the only way to hit the mark is to keep the eye fixed upon it.

2. The soldier, saith Xenophon, who first serves God, and then obeys his captain, may confidently hope to overcome his enemy.—The case is the same in spirituals.

3. The vestal virgins were wont to spend ten years in learning their religion, ten years in practising it, and ten years in teaching the young vestals.

4. He who hath his thoughts about him can enjoy no bodily pleasure while he thinks his soul is in danger of hell fire. But the reflection that all is right with respect to another world, doubles every joy we can taste in this. As Livy tells us of Paulus Æmilius, who had vanquished Perseus, but for a while thought he had lost his son Scipio—*Ne sincero gaudio frueretur, cura de minore filio stimulabat.* When his son returned alive and well, *Tunc demum, recepto sospite filio, victoriæ tantæ gaudium consensit.* Lib. xliv. sect. 44. His anxiety respecting his youngest son prevented his satisfaction from being complete. But when his son returned alive and well, then at last the consul opened his mind to the full enjoyment of so great a victory. The pleasures of sense are pleasures only to the virtuous, and the Christian, after all, turns out to be the true epicure.

5. Boerhaave, through life, consecrated the first hour after he rose in the morning to meditation and prayer; declaring that from thence he derived vigor and aptitude for business, together with equanimity under provocations, and a perfect conquest over his irascible passions. "The sparks of calumny," he would say, "will be presently extinct of themselves, unless you blow them—

(*Spreta exolescunt; si irascare, ignita videntur,*)

and therefore, in return, he chose rather to commend the good qualities of his calumniators (if they had any) than to dwell upon the bad."—Life, p. 53.

6. To our Saviour and his commands may be applied, with propriety, what Hamlet, in Shakspere, says of the injunctions of his father's ghost:

——Remember thee!
Yea, from the table of my memory
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,
That youth and observation copied there;
And thy commandment all alone shall live
Within the book and volume of my brain,
Unmixt with baser matter.——

7. To one who knows much of religion, and practises little, may be applied what Milton says of Satan perched on the tree of life:

——Nor on the virtue thought
Of that life-giving plant, but only us'd
For prospect, what, well us'd, had been the pledge
Of immortality; so little knows
Any, but God alone, to value right
The good before him, but perverts best things
To worst abuse, or to their meanest use.
P. L. iv. 196.

8. Lord Astley, before he charged, at the battle of Edgehill, made this short prayer—"O Lord, thou knowest how busy I must be this day. If I forget thee, do not thou forget me!" There were certainly, says Hume, much longer prayers said in the parliamentary army; but I doubt if there was so good a one. Vol. vii. p. 65.

9. The divine, who spends all his time in

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study, and contemplation on objects ever so sublime and glorious, while his people are left uninstructed, acts the same part the eagle would do, that should sit all day staring at the sun, while her young ones were starving in the nest.

10. Dr. Ogden's secret for rendering the commandments easy is—Love. The saying of madam Chevreuse is true in the *highest* sense. "Without love, you can never rely on the heart of a person at a minute's warning; you can never inspire it with that fervor and vivacity so necessary in whatever you wish to obtain."

11. Apply to the Bible these two lines of Tibullus:

Te spectem, suprema mihi cum venerit hora,
Te teneam moriens, deficiente manu!

and the following of Pythagoras:

Ταυτα ποιει, ταυτ' εκμελετα, τουτων χρη εραν σε,
Ταυτα σε της ζειης αρετης εις υχνια βησει.

12. Aben Ezra, on Exod. xxxviii. 8, extols the generosity of those women who devoted to the construction of a holy vessel (the laver) those utensils of self-love (their brazen mirrors) for which the persons of their sex have so great an inclination, and who showed, by such a sacrifice, that they preferred the service of God to the pleasures and vanities of the world.—Saurin, Diss. 466.

Thomas Aquinas's Prayer before Study.

Ineffably wise and good Creator, illustrious original, true fountain of light and wisdom, vouchsafe to infuse into my understanding some ray of thy brightness, thereby removing that twofold darkness, under which I was born, of sin and ignorance.

Thou, that makest the tongues of infants eloquent, instruct, I pray thee, my tongue likewise; and pour upon my lips the grace of thy benediction.

Give me quickness to comprehend, and memory to retain; give me happiness in expounding, a facility in learning, and a copious eloquence in speaking.

Prepare my entrance on the road of science, direct me in my journey, and bring me safely to the end of it, even happiness and glory, in thine eternal kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord.—See the Latin.

DISPUTATION.

1. Disputation makes us ready and expert in using the knowledge we have, but sufficeth not for the acquisition of more. It is *exercise*, but not *food*. Hist. of R. S. p. 18.

2. It is but too much a custom to give ill names to those who differ from us in opinion. Dr. Hammond mentions, as a humorous instance of it, that when a Dutchman's horse does not go as he would have him, he in great rage calls him an *Arminian*.

DUELLING.

From the will of colonel Thomas, dated London, September 3, 1783:

"I am now called upon, and by the rules of what is called honor, forced into a personal interview with Col. Gordon. God only can know the event; and into his hands I commit my soul, conscious only of having done my duty. In the first place I commit my soul to Almighty God, in hopes of his mercy and pardon for the irreligious step I now (in compliance with the unwarrantable customs of this wicked world) put myself under the necessity of taking."

ECCLESIASTICUS.

The late Sir Edward Dering used so say, "He did not pretend to understand much of the Bible, buf he was sure the gentleman who wrote that book knew the world as well as any man that ever lived in it." Sept. 29, 1782. There is more good sense, and are better precepts for the conduct of life, than in all the morality of the heathen. Dr. Campbell, Biog. Brit. 215.—It is pity but a small and fair edition of the Greek were printed for the use of scholars and preachers.

ECSTASIES.

There is a set of Mahometan heretics, who excuse themselves from going the pilgrimage to Mecca, affirming, that the purity of their souls, their sublime contemplations, &c. show them Mecca and Mahomet's tomb, without stirring out of their cells.—They are called Ebrbuharites.

EDUCATION.

1. So important a concern did the right education of children appear to Augustus Cæsar, that, when master of the world he himself attended to that of his grandchildren. *Nepotes et literas, et alia rudimenta, per se plerumque docuit: ac nihil æque laboravit quam ut imitarentur chirographum suum. Neque cænavit una, nisi ut imo lecto assiderent: neque iter fecit, nisi ut vehiculo anteirent, aut circa adequitarent.* Sueton. August. 64. Ernest.—He himself instructed his grandsons in the rudiments of literature and science, and was peculiarly assiduous to teach them to imitate his own hand-writing. They always supped in his company, and were placed on

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the lowest couch; and on all his journeys they either preceded him in another carriage, or rode on horseback by his side.

So in the same place, with respect to the girls—*Filiam et neptes ita instituit, ut etiam lanificio assuefaceret, vetaretque loqui aut agere quidquam, nisi propalam, et quod in diurnos commentarios referretur.*—His daughter and grand-daughters by his direction were carefully taught to spin: and they were habituated to speak and act on all occasions so openly, that every word and deed might be entered in a journal.

2. The Neapolitan jockeys break in their colts with so rough a hand, and such want of temper, that the animal's spirit is quite beaten down: I once saw one thrown down by a brutal fellow, and almost strangled. Travels in the Sicilies.

3. Such is the force of education and habit, that there is hardly a quaker to be found, young or old, who has not the command of the irascible passions. Why can it not be so with others?

4. "In the schools of philosophy anciently," says Goldsmith (i. 339.), "were taught the great maxims of true policy: the rules of every kind of duty; the motives for a true discharge of them; what we owe to our country; the right use of authority; wherein true courage consists; in a word, the qualities that form the good citizen, statesman, and great captain; and in all these Epaminondas excelled."—See his character there drawn, for eloquence, knowledge, modesty; he knew not what it was to be ostentatious. Spintherus said of him, "he had never met with a man, who knew more or spoke less." —O that our young statesmen and officers would copy him!—Agesilaus, himself a great commander, seeing him passing at the head of his infantry, after having attentively considered and followed him with his eyes a long time, could not help crying out, in admiration of him, *O the wonder-working man!*

5. Indulgence, when shown in too great a degree by parents to children, generally meets with a bad return. It seems to awaken a strange malignity in human nature towards those who have thus *displayed* an injudicious fondness. Children delight in vexing such parents. There may be two reasons—1. It makes them feel foolish, to be so *cockered* and teased with kindness. 2. It discovers a weakness, over which they can insult and triumph. But whatever may be the cause, it furnishes an argument to parents, why they should never practice this behavior towards their children.—The present miseries of France arose under the government of a kind and indulgent monarch.

6. We are all in a state of education for the kingdom of heaven, *in statu pupillari*, upon earth: the education of our immortal spirits is our sole business. For this we are formed in the womb, and pass through the several stages of infancy, youth, and manhood. Studies of the school fit us for manhood; so manhood, and the several occupations consequent upon it, is a state of preparation for something else. Faith and practice are the end of wisdom and knowledge, and prepare us for the conversation, society, and intercourse of angels, as wisdom and knowledge prepare us for the conversation of men.

7. Milton's plan of education has more of show than value. He does not recommend those studies to boys, which, as Cicero says, *adolescentiam alunt*. Instead of laying a stress on such authors as open and enlarge a young understanding, he prescribes an early acquaintance with geometry and physics: but these will teach no generous sentiments, nor inculcate such knowledge as is of use at all times and on all occasions. Mathematics and astronomy do not enter into the proper improvement and general business of the mind—such sciences do not apply to the manners, nor operate upon the character. They are extraneous and technical. They are useful; but useful as the knowledge of his art is to the artificer. An excellent writer observes, we are perpetually moralists, but we are geometricians only by chance. Our intercourse with intellectual nature is necessary; our speculations upon matter are voluntary and at leisure. Physical knowledge is of such rare emergence, that one man may know another half his life, without being able to estimate his skill in hydrostatics or astronomy: but his moral and prudential character immediately appears. Those authors therefore are to be read at schools, that supply most axioms of prudence, most principles of moral truth, and most materials for conversation; and these purposes are best served by poets, orators, and historians. (Warton, 117.)—Milton afterwards reasoned better on this subject, P. L. viii. 191.

EULER.

This is a bird in Iceland. It lays most eggs in rainy weather: as soon as the young ones are out of the egg, the mother leads them to the shore: when they come to the water side, she takes them upon her back, and swims with them for the space of a few yards, when she dives, and the young ones, who are left floating on the water, are obliged to take care of themselves. So the parent carries children into the world, *dives*, and

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leaves them to combat with its waves. Van Troil's Letters.

ELOQUENCE.

For the difference between Cicero's eloquence and that of some who styled themselves *Attic*, dealing in short sentences and turns, like Pliny afterwards, see Middleton's Life of Cicero, iii. 332.—Is there not at this time a similar decline in England from the true, nervous flowing eloquence—particularly of the pulpit? Dr. *Blair* is the *Pliny*.

EMPLOYMENT.

1. Employment is the best cure for *grief*; as Tacitus tells us of Agricola, that, when he had lost his son, *in luctu bellum inter remedia erat*—he resorted to war as a remedy against grief. In Vitâ, sect. 28.

2. Cheerfulness is the daughter of *employment*; and I have known a man come home in high spirits from a funeral, merely because he had had the management of it.

3. Anxiety and melancholy are best dispelled and kept at a distance by *employment*. On the day before the battle of Pharsalia, Plutarch tells us, when dinner was ended in the camp, while others either went to sleep, or were disquieting their minds with apprehensions concerning the approaching battle, Brutus employed himself in writing till the evening, composing an epitome of Polybius.

ENEMIES.

The use to be made of their revilings, &c., is thus set forth by Bishop Taylor: "Our enemies perform accidentally the office of friends: they tell us our faults, with all their deformities and aggravations: they offer us affronts, which exercise our patience, and restrain us from scandalous crimes, lest we become a *scorn and reproof to them that hate us*. And it is not the least of God's mercies, that he permits enmities among men, by means of which our failings are reproved more sharply, and corrected with more severity and simplicity than they would otherwise be. The gentle hand of a friend is more apt to bind our wounds up, than to probe them and make them smart."—See Life of Christ, for. p. 541.

ENVY.

Envy pines at the applauses which virtue receives; as Plutarch tells us, that when Titus Flaminius, by conquering Philip, had restored the Grecian cities to their freedom, the acclamations of the people assembled at the celebration of the Isthmian games caused the crows, as they were flying over the stage, to drop down dead upon it.—In Vitâ Flamin.

EPAMINONDAS.—HIS HUMILITY AND PATRIOTISM.

His enemies, jealous of his glory, with a design to affront him, caused him to be elected the city scavenger. He accepted the place with thanks, and declared, that, instead of deriving honor from his office, he would give it dignity in his turn.—I dare say kennels never were so well scoured before.

EVIL.—ORIGIN OF IT.

1. The philosophers of old saw the world overflowed by a torrent of corruption, as the Egyptians beheld their country every year deluged by the Nile. Both were equally to seek for the spring-head and cause of these effects.

2. The ancient philosophers speak of man's degeneracy, with its consequences, in a much better way than many who pretend to be friends to reason and to Christ, but are so to neither, while they make it their business to extenuate the fall of man, and the corruption introduced thereby into human nature. See some wonderful citations in Orig. Sacr. iii. 3.

EULER.

Euler lived at Petersburgh during the administration of Biron, one of the most tyrannical ministers that ever breathed. On the philosopher's coming to Berlin, after the tyrant's death, the late queen of Prussia, who could hardly get a word out of him, asked him the reason of his silence.—"Because," said he, "I come from a place where if a man says a word he is hanged."

EURIPIDES.

Many of the Athenians, during their captivity at Syracuse, owed the good usage they met with to the scenes of Euripides, which they repeated to their captors, who were extremely fond of them. On their return they went and saluted that poet as their deliverer, and informed him of the admirable effects, wrought in their favor by his verses. Scarce any circumstance could be more pleasing and flattering than this testimony.

EXERCISE.

The most common cause of fatness is too great a quantity of food, and two small a quantity of motion; in plain English, gluttony and laziness. I am of opinion, that spare diet and labor will keep constitutions, where this disposition is strongest, from being fat. You may see in an army forty thousand foot soldiers without a fat man amongst them: and I dare affirm, that by plenty and rest twenty of the forty shall grow fat.—Arbuthnot.

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FACTION.

While a faction entertain their old principles, it is folly to suppose they will not, when opportunity serves, return to their old practices. *Quæro, quid facturi fuissetis? Quanquam quid facturi fueritis non dubitem, cum videam quid feceritis.* Cic. pro Ligario. The fine lady will be the *cat* she was, when a *mouse* runs before her.

FAITH.

1. In the affairs of this world, as husbandry, trade, &c., men *know* little and *believe* much. In the affairs of another world, they would know every thing, and believe nothing.

2. If we are rationally led, upon clear principles and good evidence, to believe a point, it is no objection that the point is mysterious and difficult to be accounted for. A man in his senses will not deny the phenomenon of the harvest moon, because he cannot solve it.

3. When the Jews attribute the miracles of our Saviour to the power of magic, they prove the facts, without disproving the cause to which we ascribe them.

4. Enthusiasts require *assurance*, and philosophers will be content with nothing less than *demonstration*. But how is it in the affairs of common life? The soldier does not ask a demonstration, whether, in the day of battle, he shall be crowned with victory, or covered with disgrace; but, fearing the worst, and hoping the best, he minds his duty: the merchant does not want a demonstration concerning the returns of his trade: the husbandman cannot promise himself a plentiful crop, proportioned to his labor and industry. No man can assure himself that he shall see another day: but every one minds his business as if he knew for certain that he should: and he would be thought a downright madman that acted otherwise.

5. Faith is reckoned for a virtue, and rewarded as such, because, though it be an assent of the understanding upon proper evidence, the will hath a great share in facilitating or withholding such assent. For the strongest evidence will be nothing to him who does not inquire diligently after it, judge honestly and impartially of it without passion or prejudice, and frequently consider and reflect upon it from time to time through life, that it may produce its fruits, and be a principle of action. These are acts of the will, in a man's power to perform or not to perform, and therefore rewardable. On the performance or non-performance of these, not on the evidence, which is always the same, it depends, whether a man shall believe, or not: and here we must look for the true reasons why one man is a Christian, and another an Infidel.

6. Rational evidence may satisfy men's minds of the truth of a doctrine, but it is grace which must bring them to obey and adhere to it, by convincing them of its excellence, by subduing the desires and affections that militate against it, and so improving an *historical* into a *saving* faith.

7. "Experience (saith Mr. Hume) is our only guide in matters of fact." Doth he mean our own experience or that of others? If our own, we are to believe nothing but what we ourselves have seen parallel instances of; if that of others, we depend for that upon *testimony*, which only informs us, there has been in past ages an established order and course of nature, and at certain times a violation or suspension of them.

8. There are many people who cannot see; there are more, perhaps, who will not. It is remarked of the elder Scaliger, that, in his confutation of Cardan, he would not read the second edition of the book *de Subtilitate*, in which were made a great number of corrections, lest he should be deprived of many occasions of triumphing over his adversary. Gen. Dict. Scaliger.—See another instance in Jones's Essay, p. 191.

9. Infidelity is often punished with credulity. The prediction of a mad life-guardman was attended to in London by those who never heeded the prophecies of Isaiah, or Jeremiah; and an impudent mountebank sold a large cargo of pills, which, as he told the people, were *excellent against earthquakes.*

10. The deist will not believe in revelation till every difficulty can be solved. The atheist will not believe in the being of a God, but upon the same terms. They must both die in their unbelief. They should believe upon sufficient evidence, and trust God for the rest. The atheist *e. g.* cannot reconcile the notion of a God with the existence of evil. But there is sufficient evidence for the existence of both. Here let us rest: God has his reasons for permitting evil, or he would not have permitted it. If he has been pleased to discover them in his word, or if we can discover them by a view of things, well: if not, still reasons there are; and, what we cannot know now, we shall know hereafter.

11. No *cloud* can overshadow a true Christian, but his faith will discern a *rainbow* in it.

12. First Tim. iv. 6. *Nourished up in the words of faith.*—"It is one thing for a man

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to enlighten his understanding, to fill his imagination, and to load his memory; and another to nourish his heart with it. A man nourishes himself with it, if he live upon it; and he lives upon it, if he change it into his own substance, if he practice it himself, if he render it proper and familiar unto himself, so as to make it the food and nourishment with which he ought to feed others."—Quesnel in loc.

FALSE LEARNING.

1. Some people rate the modern improvements in religious knowledge by the volumes of metaphysical subtilties written upon the subject; as the emperor Heliogabalus formed an estimate of the greatness of Rome, from ten thousand pounds' weight of cobwebs which had been found in that city.

2. Two learned physicians and a plain honest countryman, happening to meet at an inn, sat down to dinner together. A dispute presently arose between the two doctors, on the nature of aliment, which proceeded to such a height, and was carried on with so much fury, that it spoiled their meal, and they parted extremely indisposed. The countryman, in the meantime, who understood not the cause, though he heard the quarrel, fell heartily to his meat, gave God thanks, digested it well, returned in the strength of it to his honest labor, and at evening received his wages. Is there not sometimes as much difference between the *polemical* and *practical* Christian?

3. Aristotle, in his Metaphysics, disputes against certain philosophers, who, it seems, held that a thing might *be*, and *not be*, at the same time.

4. Many parts of what is called *learning* resemble the man's horse, which had but two faults; he was hard to catch, and good for nothing when he was caught.—See Warton's Preface to Theocritus, p. 17.

————Fools shall be pull'd
From wisdom's seat; those baleful unclean birds,
Those lazy owls, who, perch'd near fortune's top,
Sit only watchful with their heavy wings
To cuff down new-fledg'd virtues, that would rise
To nobler heights, and make the grove harmonious.
Pierre, of lazy Senators, in Venice Preserved.

5. The science called metaphysics seems never to have been of service to true religion, but only to have obscured and darkened its truths, which, under that cover, have often been stolen away by its enemies. May it not be compared to the *mist*, or *fog*, described by Homer, as spread on the tops of the hills?

Ηοιμησιν οτι φιλων, κλεπτη δε τε νυκτος αμεινων.—Il. γ. 11.

Swift-gliding mists the dusky fields invade,
To thieves more grateful than the midnight shade.
Pope's Il. b. iii. v. 17.

6. Superstition often leads to atheism. Many Turks are Epicureans; and in countries where popery prevails, the *philosophers*, as they affect to call themselves, are running apace into materialism. When a man has been cheated by a rogue pretending to honesty, he is apt too hastily to conclude, there is no such thing as honesty in the world.

7. Magic was originally nothing more than the application of natural philosophy to the production of surprising but yet natural effects. Chemists had opportunities of being best acquainted with the elements and their operations, and were the greatest magicians, and reputed conjurors.

8. Sir Henry Wotton ordered the following inscriptton to be put on his monument—

Disputandi pruritus ecclesiarum scabies.

The itch of disputation is the bane of the church.

9. The same person being asked, if he thought a Papist could be saved? "You may be saved," replied he, "without knowing that."—An excellent answer to the questions of impertinent curiosity in religious matters.

10. Many persons spend so much time in criticising and disputing about the Gospel, that they have none left for practising it. As if two sick men should quarrel about the phraseology of their physician's prescription, and forget to take the medicine.

11. "Geo. Trapezuntius had a good portion of the spirit which prevailed among the learned of his times: proud, conceited, dogmatical, impatient of contradiction, and quarrelsome, he contributed, as much as any one, to falsify the maxim of Ovid—*Ingenuas didicesse*, &c." Biog. Dict.—See instance of Laurentius Valle, Valesius, Scioppius, Scaliger, Cardan, and others.

12. Never (say the moderns) were the SS. so much studied, and so thoroughly explained, as at present. So, probably, said the Pharisees, and doctors of the law when they crucified Christ. Refined criticisms on the sacred writings made the most fashionable branch of learning among the Jews, in comparison of which, profane literature was held in great contempt, and indeed, by many of their zealots, in great abhorrence.—See Joseph. Antiq. lib. xx. cap. ult. sect. ult. Doddridge, i. 317.—Our Lord "received not glory from men;" he never soothed the vanity of great and learned men, in order to obtain their favor. The Jews *searched the SS.* but it was in order to find in them their own

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fond fancies concerning temporal greatness, wealth, and dominion.

13. Apply to the contrast between the salutary doctrines and beautiful imagery of Scripture on the one hand, and the noxious tenets and barren speculations of metaphysical scepticism on the other, the following lines of Collins in his Oriental Eclogues—

Here, where no springs in murmurs break away,
Or moss-crowned fountains mitigate the day,
In vain ye hope the dear delights to know,
Which plains more blest, or verdant vales bestow;
Here rocks alone, and tasteless sands are found,
And faint and sickly winds for ever howl around.

Ecl. ii. Hassan's address to his camels travelling through the burning deserts of the East.

14. Apply to the case of a Christian what Pacatius says of Theodosius, and the treatment he received from fortune—*Quem sceptro et solio distinaverat, nunquam indulgenter habuit: sed ut severi patres his quos diligunt tristiores sunt, ita illa te plurimis et difficillimis reipublicæ temporibus exercuit, dum aptat imperio.*—Fortune did not treat with kindness the man whom she had destined for the sceptre and the throne: but as severe parents are most harsh to the children whom most they love, so she prepared him for empire by the trials which she obliged him to sustain in the most difficult season of the republic.

15. Saurin, after mentioning some insignificant criticism upon which the commentators enlarge, makes the following very pertinent observation—"Such is the spirit of mankind, that they often consider slightly those great truths of the SS. upon which our whole religion is founded, expatiating into discussions upon matters of no relation either to our duty or our happiness." Diss. xxi. p. 181.—So again—"It is amazing to find learned men, who would blush to employ but a few minutes in studying the ornaments that are most in fashion in their own time, and who have yet the patience to devour immense volumes, to learn with great exactness those of the remotest age." xx. 194.—See Law's Christ. Perfect. on this subject. See Saurin, 504.

16. Metaphysical speculations are lofty, but frigid; as Lunardi, after ascending to an immense height in the atmosphere, came down covered with icicles.

17. Many fine books of religion and morality are already written. We are eager for more. But if we duly attended to the Gospel, should we want them? A single short direction from God himself is authoritative and decisive. A text would save us the trouble of reading many dissertations; and the time which we thus spend in learning, or rather, perhaps, pretending to learn, our duty, might be spent in practising it.

FAME.

Places in the temple of fame are a tenure, against which, of all others, *quo warrantos* are sure to be issued.

FLOWERS PROSCRIBED.

When the Dutch patriots were rampant in 1787, flowers of an orange color were proscribed; and the officers of justice were for some time employed in removing anemones and ranunculuses from the Hague. Their restoration was soon after effected by the Prussian troops.—See Bowdler's Letters, p. 43.

FORTITUDE.

1. Frederic the famous duke of Saxony was playing at chess in his tent with his cousin and fellow-prisoner the landgrave of Lithenberg, when a writ was brought him, signed by the emperor, for his execution the next morning, in the sight of his wife and children, and the whole city of Wittemberg. Having carefully perused it, he laid it down as a paper of no concern, and saying to the landgrave, "Cousin, take good heed to your game," returned to his play, and gave him a check-mate.

2. It is a noble character which Ascham gives of the above-mentioned duke—"He thinketh nothing which he dare not speak, and speaketh nothing which he will not do."

3. Polybius relates, that when the battle was begun, which was to decide the fate of the Macedonian empire, Perseus basely withdrew to the city Pydne, under pretence of sacrificing to Hercules; "a god," says Plutarch, "that is not wont to regard the offerings of cowards, or grant such requests as are unjust; it not being reasonable, that he, who never shoots, should carry away the prize; that he should triumph, who sneaks from the battle; or he, who takes no pains, should meet with success. To Emilius's petition the god listened; for he prayed for victory with his sword in his hand, and was fighting at the same time that he implored the divine assistance."—An excellent hint for the Christian soldier to observe and improve upon.

4. "To stand in fear of the people's censure or common talk may argue a harmless and peaceable mind, but never a brave and truly heroic soul." Plutarch, 94.

5. The body's weakness often proves to be the soul's strength, and men are better Christians in sickness than in health: like the soldier in Antigonus's army, who, being naturally weak and sickly, was a very hero, till, out of regard for him, the king put him under the care of his physicians, who made a cure of him; after which, he never appeared so

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fond of danger, or daring in battle, being delivered from that misery which made life a burden.—Plut. in Vit. Pelop.

6. A general in time of peace, a pilot in a calm, and a clergyman when people are in health, are of very little account. War, storm, and sickness, cause them all to be sought to and confided in.

7. A Christian is a warrior by his profession, and has, through life, a succession of enemies to encounter. Lust attacks him in the days of his youth, ambition disquiets his riper years, and avarice infests his old age. His condition reminds one of that observation of Plutarch concerning the Romans of the first ages, that "if ever God designed that men should spend their lives in war, they were the men. In their infancy they had the Carthaginians to contend with for Sicily; in their middle age the Gauls for Italy itself; and in their old age they were obliged again to contend with the Carthaginians and Hannibal."—Vit. Marcell. ad init.

8. When a Christian beholds sickness (his last more especially) coming towards him, he should address it, as St. Andrew did the cross, as that which he had long expected, and which would convey him to his blessed Master, by whose sufferings it had been sanctified. Let us also bear in mind, that even on the cross St. Andrew ceased not to instruct and admonish those around him. The words of a preacher, in such circumstances, never fail to make a deep and lasting impression.—*Illè verò, cum Crucem eminus intueretur, eam salutavit, hortatusque est, ut discipulum ejus, qui ei suffixus fuisset, exciperet; eam dedicatam et consecratam esse Christi corpori, ejusque membris, quasi margaritis, ornatam; diu eam defatigari ipsum expectando, quemadmodum Christum magistrum expectâsset; lætum se ad illam venire, cujus desiderio jam diu teneretur: itaque orare, ut se exciperet, ac magistro redderet; ut per illam ipsum Christus reciperet, qui per eam ipsum redemisset. Cumque ventum esset ad Crucem, primùm Christum oravit, deinde populum hortatus est, ut in eâ fide et religione, quam* tradidisset, *permaneret. In Cruce verò biduum vixit, cum interea nullum finem docendi populi fecit.*—Peronius de Gestis Apostolorum.

He saluted the cross when he beheld it afar off, and entreated it to receive him as the disciple of that Master who had himself been nailed upon it. He declared that it was dedicated and consecrated to the body of Christ, and was more adorned with his limbs than if inlaid with pearls; that it had long expected him, as it has expected his Master Christ before him; that he had long looked forward to it with impatience, and was now arrived at it with pleasure: wherefore he besought it to receive him, and restore him to his Master; that the same cross, by which he had been redeemed, might be the instrument of conveying him to his Redeemer. When come to the foot of the cross, he first prayed to Christ, and then exhorted the people to remain steadfast in the faith which he had delivered to them. He lived two days upon the cross, and during all that time never ceased to admonish and instruct the people.

FRETFULNESS.

The argument urged against it by the Psalmist deserves to be well fixed in our minds; and indeed, if it were so, we should need no other. "Fret not thyself against the ungodly, &c. FOR they shall soon be cut down like the grass," &c. Who could envy a flower, though ever so gay and beautiful in its colors, when he saw that the next stroke of the mower would sweep it away for ever?

GREATNESS.

A man wishes for it, and cannot be easy without it: no sooner has he attained his wish, but you hear him lamenting his hard lot, complaining of cares, and troubles, and visits: he has no peace, not an hour to himself; his expenditure is greater than his income, &c. &c. All this is wrong; he only exposes his own weakness. He wanted honor and exaltation: he has got them, and must take their necessary appendages with them. If he thinks proper to receive the pay, he should not find fault with the duty. The troubles of a station are designed as an antidote to the poison of its temptations. They humble the possessor, and show him to himself. They should be borne with meekness and patience, and made this use of. See what Fenelon has said on the *Cross of Prosperity*, ii. 143. 155. Also a sermon in Massillon's *Petit Carême*, where he shows a *court* to be the best school for learning mortification and self-denial.

GRIEF.

Grief is fruitless and unavailable in every case but one, viz. *sin*. We take to it kindly in every instance but that.

HAPPINESS, ON FIFTY-SIX POUNDS PER ANNUM.

A clergyman applied to the dean of Christ-Church for the little vicarage of Blenddington, then vacant, value, *de claro*, about 40*l.* per ann. "Sir," said he, "I maintain a wife and six children on 56*l.* per ann.—Not

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that I should regard the matter, were the income certain: but when a man considers it may be taken from him any day of the week, he cannot be quite so easy."—"I will get the living for you, if I can," answered the dean; "but I would not have you raise your expectations too high; because, if any member of the college will take it, by our rules he must have it."—"O sir," replied the divine, "it would make me the happiest man in the world!—but if I miss it, I shall not be unhappy.—I never knew what it was to be unhappy for one hour in my whole life."

HIGH CHURCH.

A name invented, according to Mr. Leslie, under which the church of England might be abused with greater security. Such are declared by Steele, in his Crisis, to be worse than Papists, and the very opposite to Protestants. Leslie, in his letter from Barle-duc, speaks of rods and tests prepared for the church of England by the Whigs, &c. had they succeeded in Sacheverel's trial; the intention of which was to make her *swallow her own dung*, as they said, and abjure her doctrines.

HISTORY.

1. History, in general, is an account of what men have done to make each other unhappy. In the history of the present age, it is a striking circumstance, that the historian, amidst a series of murders and calamities, is glad to relieve himself and his reader, by dwelling on so minute an incident, of a different kind, as that of the seeds sown by Anson on the desert isle of Fernandes, which the Spaniards afterwards found to be grown up; and the goats, with their ears cut which served to verify the adventures of Selkirk, who, being left upon the island, had lived there several years.—See Age of Louis XIV. ii. 109.

2. Lord Chesterfield gives a good direction in reading history, viz. to read some short general history of a country; to mark the curious and interesting periods, such as revolutions in the government, religion, laws, &c.; then to consult the larger histories for full information as to *them*.

3. It is well observed by Hume, that, in reading history, trivial incidents, which show the manners of the age, are often more instructive, as well as entertaining, than the great transactions of wars and negociations, which are nearly similar in all periods, and in all countries of the world. Vol. v. 56.

4. History, while it instructs us, flatters our pride by the manner in which that instruction is conveyed. For what we learn by *precept*, we are indebted to the wisdom and authority of another. The learning obtained from *example* is obtained by deductions and applications of our own.

HOBBES.

"Let us do justice," says Bishop Warburton, "to that great man's memory, at a time his writings seem entirely neglected; whom with all his errors, and those of the most dangerous nature, we must allow to be one of the first men of his age, for a bright wit, a deep penetration, and a cultivated understanding: several of whose uncommon speculations, while they remained with him, lay unregarded; but, when taken up by others, of whom we deservedly have a better opinion, received their due applause and approbation. ———Mr. Locke borrowed and improved many—*e. g.* that liberty belongs not to the will—the finest and most intricate dissertation in his Essay, as he confesses to Limborch." Warburton's Miscell. Translations in Prose and Verse, p. 124, printed 1724, for Barker, with a Latin dedication to Sir Robert Sutton. —[Hobbes was a great favorite with Voltaire: "Virtuous citizen! enterprising spirit—the forerunner of Spinosa and of Locke!"—It is said in thy law of nature, "that every man having a right to all things, every one has a right over the life of his fellow-creatures." Is not power here confounded with right?—See Voltaire's Ignorant Philosopher, p. 53.]

HONESTY.

"Honesty," saith Dr. Rees, in his Dictionary, "is a plant supposed to be possessed of eminent medical virtues; but it hath not the fortune to be received into the *shops*."—The doctor is perfectly grave, but the words admit of a humorous sense.

HOPE.

When the soul grows weary in her Christian course, and is ready to faint by the way, she should be refreshed and invigorated by a view of those heavenly joys, which are to reward her labors. For so when the Carthaginian soldiers were well nigh overcome with the difficulty and danger of the passage over the Alps, their wise general, from the top of those stupendous mountains, whence there was a prospect of all Italy, showed them the fruitful plains watered by the river Po, to which they were almost come; and therefore, that they had but one effort more to make, before they arrived at them. He represented to them, that a battle or two would put a glorious period to their toils,

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and enrich them for ever, by giving them possession of the capital of the Roman empire. This speech, filled with such pleasing hopes, and enforced by the sight of Italy, inspired the dejected soldiers with fresh vigor and alacrity to pursue their march.

HUMAN FRAME.

1. Chyle is an *emulsion*, in making which from the food we take in, the teeth and jaws act as the pestle and mortar; the spittle, bile, pancreatic juice, &c. are the menstruum, instead of the water which the chemist employs; the stomach and intestines are the press; and the lacteal vessels the strainers to separate the pure *emulsion* from its fæces. Arbuthnot on Aliment, p. 67.

2. What mechanism is that, which can attenuate a fluid compounded of the ingredients of human aliment, as oil, salts, earth, and water, so as to make it flow freely through the lymphatic vessels, though some of them are a hundred times smaller than the arterial capillaries, ten of which are not equal to one hair! What mechamism is that, which from one uniform juice can extract all the variety of vegetable juices to be found in plants; which from such variety of food as enters the stomach of an animal, can make a fluid very nearly uniform, viz. blood; and again from that uniform fluid can produce the variety of juices in the animal's body! Yet all these operations are as mechanically and regularly performed as corn is ground in a mill, or cider made from apples in a press.

3. The lacteal vessels are the *roots* of an animal, whereby it draws its nourishment from the food in the intestines, as a vegetable does from the mould in which it is set; only a vegetable has its root planted without, and an animal within itself. A fœtus in the womb is nourished like a plant, but afterwards by a root planted within itself.—P. 74.

4. Some insects have their wind-pipes on the surface of their bodies, and are therefore killed by the contact of oil, not as a poison, but as it excludes the air.—Arbuthnot on Air, p. 115.

IDLENESS.

1. An indolent, idle man is a *carcass*; and, if he does not take care, the *birds of prey* (the ministers of vengeance) will be at him. In Romney Marsh, when the ravens, hovering on high, and keeping a sharp look-out, see a sheep turned on his back, so fat and unwieldy that he cannot recover himself, they instantly souse down upon him, pick out his eyes, and then devour the body, carrying it away piece-meal, as they are able. Persons are then set to watch on purpose to prevent this catastrophe.—*Watch YE!* King's Morsels of Criticism.

2. Adam worked in Paradise; afterwards in the world. "My Father worketh hitherto," says our Lord, "and I work." There is probably no absolute idleness, but in hell, and in the resemblances of hell.—Ditto, p. 126.

3. The busy man, say the Turks, is troubled with one devil, but the idle man is tormented with a thousand.

4. Idleness is the most painful situation of the mind, as *standing still*, according to Galen, is of the body.—See Brown's Vulgar Errors, iii. 1.

5. The irksomeness of being idle is humorously hit off by Voltaire's old woman in Candide, who puts it to the philosophers,—Which is worst; to experience all the miseries through which every one of us hath passed, or, TO REMAIN HERE DOING NOTHING?

6. Bishop Cumberland being told by some of his friends, that he would wear himself out by intense application, replied,—"It is better to *wear* out than to *rust* out."

7. It was an observation of Swift, that he never knew any man come to greatness and eminence, who lay a bed in a morning.

8. The most sluggish of creatures, called the Potto or Sloth, is also the most horrible for its ugliness—to show the deformity of *idleness*, and, if possible, to frighten us from it.

9. In the mind, as well as the body natural and politic, stagnation is followed by putrefaction. A want of proper motion does not breed rest and stability, but a motion of another kind; a motion unseen and intestine, which does not preserve, but destroy.

10. Sloth proceeds from want of *faith* or *courage*, or *love*, 2 Peter, i. 8. *Add to faith virtue*, &c.—*These things make you, that you be* ουκ αργους—not idle and unprofitable.—See Whitby in loc.

11. The following is an admirable observation of Rousseau, in his *Confessions*, b. v. vol. ii. p. 89.—"In my opinion, idleness is no less the pest of *society*, than of solitude. Nothing contracts the mind, nothing engenders trifles, tales, backbiting, slander, and falsities, so much as being shut up in a room, opposite each other, reduced to no other occupation than the necessity of continual chattering. When every one is employed, they speak only when they have something to say; but, if you are doing nothing, you must absolutely talk incessantly; and this, of all constraints, is the most troublesome, and the most dangerous. I dare go even farther, and maintain, that, to render a circle truly

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agreeable, every one must be not only doing something, but something which requires a little attention."

JEWS.

Lord Chesterfield once told lady Fanny Shirley, in a serious discourse they had on the evidences of Christianity, that there was *one*, which he thought to be invincible, not to be got over by the wit of man; viz. *the present state of the Jews*—a fact to be accounted for on no human principle.—This anecdote was related to me by a person who had it from lady Fanny herself.

INTENTION.

Intention is the same in the inner man, as the eye is in the outer. While the eye is clear, it illuminates the whole body; each member is perfectly enlightened for the performance of its functions as if itself were an eye. If any humors suffuse the eye, the whole body is instantly overwhelmed with darkness. So the system of a man's conduct by a pure or vitiated *intention*. The intention is the *view* in which the action is performed, the *aim*, as we say, taken before the performance of it. If the light be darkness, if that which ought to direct the action be itself perverted and depraved, how great must be that depravity!

KINGS.

1. "Before an opera is to be performed at Turin, the king himself takes the pains to read it over, and to erase every line that can admit of an indecent or double meaning. This attention is particularly paid to the theatre, on account of the morals of the royal family." Mrs. Miller's Letters from Italy, i. 200.

2. Kings honor human nature, when they distinguish and reward those who do most honor to it, and while they give encouragement to those superior geniuses, who employ themselves in perfecting our knowledge, and who devote themselves to the worship of truth. Happy are the sovereigns who themselves cultivate the sciences; who think with Cicero, that Roman consul, the deliverer of his country, and father of eloquence; "Literature is the accomplishment of youth, and the charm of old age. It gives a lustre to prosperity, and a comfort to adversity; at home and abroad, in travel and in retirement, at all times and in all places, it is the delight of life."—A king, guided by justice, has the universe for his temple, and good men are the priests that sacrifice to him—Critical Essay on Mac.

3. Though the mask of dissimulation should for some time cover the natural deformity of a prince, he cannot always keep it on. He must take it off sometimes, in order to breathe; and one single opportunity is sufficient to satisfy the curious. Artifice, then, shall seat itself in vain on the lips of a prince. We do not form a judgment of men from their words, but by comparing their actions with them, and with each other. Falsehood and dissimulation can never stand this test. A man can act well no part but his own; and, to appear to advantage, must appear in his proper character.—Ibid.

4. Be not thou, then, wicked with the wicked, but be thou virtuous and intrepid among them. Thou wilt make thy people virtuous as thyself; thy neighbors will imitate thee, and the wicked tremble.—Ibid.

5. Inundations which lay countries waste, lightnings which reduce cities to ashes, the poison of the plague which dispeoples provinces, are not so fatal to the world, as the dangerous morals and unruly passions of kings. Calamities from heaven endure but for a time; they destroy but some countries; and those losses, though grievous, are retrievable: but the crimes of kings cause whole nations to suffer, from generation to generation.—Ibid.

LANGUAGE (FIGURATIVE) OF THE SS.

Respecting the figurative language of the Scripture, there is this curious and important question to be determined—Whether God adopted it, because it was the style of the eastern nations; or it became the style of the eastern nations, because God originally constituted and employed it?

LAWS.

The observation, made by a great casuist on human laws, holds much stronger with regard to divine ones—"The obedience of that man is much too delicate, who insists upon knowing the *reason* of all laws, before he will obey them. The lawgiver must be supposed to have given his sanction to the law from the reason of the thing; but, where we cannot discover the reason of it, the *sanction* is to be the only reason of our obedience." Bp. Taylor's Duct. Dub. b. iii. c. vi. rule 3.

LEARNING.

1. There is no kind of knowledge which, in the hands of the diligent and skilful, will not turn to account. Honey exudes from all flowers, the bitter not excepted; and the bee knows how to extract it.

2. Cicero's apology for the great men of Rome who employed their leisure hours in

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philosophical disquisitions is worthy notice: some, it seems, thought such employment unworthy of them.—"*Quasi verò clarorum virorum aut tacitos congressus esse oporteat, aut* ludicros *sermones, aut rerum colloquia* leviorum.——*Nec quidquam aliud videndum est nobis, quos populus Romanus hoc in gradu collocavit, nisi ne quid privatis studiis de operâ publicâ detrahamus. Quod si, quum fungi munere debeamus, operam nostram nunquam a populari cœtu removemus, quis reprehendet nostrum otium, qui in eo non modò nosmetipsos hebescere et languere nolumus, sed etiam ut plurimis prosimus enitimur?*"—Acad Lucull. sect. 6.—As if it were proper for eminent men to remain mute in company, or to confine their conversation to drollery and trifles. Placed as we are by the Roman people in this elevated station, our only concern is to take care, that private study never withdraws us from a due attention to the public service. But if we are ever ready to perform every duty we owe to our country, who shall grudge us an application of our leisure, by which we not only rescue ourselves from indolence, but endeavor to produce fruits advantageous to others?

3. There are some who have too mean an opinion of their own abilities, and by fancying themselves to be useless, become so, and dare not attempt many things, in which they are capable of succeeding, and which they ought to perform. This behavior arises more from INDOLENCE or MELANCHOLY, than from humility. Jortin's Sermons, iv. 24.

4. Inventors and projectors, however wild and visionary, often afford matter, which a wise man will know how to qualify and turn to use, though they did not. See Account of Settlement in America, i. 65.

5. Mr. Locke always used to say, "I like your *builders;* for, whether they succeed or not in constructing the edifice, they bring together materials very valuable to a more skilful architect." See Sublime and Beautiful, 92.

6. An original genius resembles the eagle, who disdains to share the plunder of another bird; and will take up with no prey, but that which he has acquired by his own pursuit.

7. "I pity unlearned gentlemen in a rainy day" was the usual saying of Lord Falkland.

LIGHT AND LOVE.

Light is the great source of blessing in the natural world, *love* in the moral. The excellencies of both are united in the Divine Nature: *God is light*, and *God is love*. A slavish and superstitious fear of God proceeds, therefore, from a misapprehension of him; as when the disciples saw Jesus walking upon the sea, and knew not who it was, they were scared with the appearance; and therefore our Lord, to take off their fear, only made himself better known to them: *It is I*, says he, *be not afraid*. See Norris's Sermons, xi. 194.

LOCKMAN.

1. The famous oriental philosopher, Lockman, while a slave, being presented by his master with a bitter melon, immediately ate it all. How was it possible, said his master, for you to eat so nauseous a fruit? Lockman replied, "I have received so many favors from you, that it is no wonder I should once in my life eat a bitter melon from your hand." This generous answer of the slave struck the master to such a degree, that he immediately gave him his liberty.—With such sentiments should man receive his portion of sufferings at the hand of God.

2. The same Lockman, being informed by angels (as the legend goes) that God would make him a monarch, replied—"If he would grant me liberty to choose my condition of life, I had rather continue in my present state, and be kept from offending him: otherwise all the grandeur and splendor of the world would be troublesome to me."

"Speak the truth," said the same philosopher;—"keep your word;—and intermeddle not in affairs which do not concern you."

"Be a learned man, a disciple of the learned, or an auditor of the learned; at least be a lover of knowledge, and desirous of improvement."

LYNCH (DEAN.)

He was a constant preacher through life, either at the cathedral, one of his livings, or at Grove, his family estate; in short, wherever he happened to be. Of his charities a judgment may be formed from the following circumstance. His son was sent for by the citizens of Canterbury, and chosen burgess, without a shilling expense. "Sir," said the poorer freemen, sitting sober in their houses when he went round to thank them, "you had a right to command our votes; *your father fed us*, and *your mother clothed us.*" Communicated to me by Dr. Beauvoir, who went round with him. The dean never forgot anything once treasured up in his memory.

MACDONALD (HUGH.)

The world tempts and disappoints; it excites desires after happiness, but satisfies them not. The case of its votaries too much resembles that of the perfidious rebel, Hugh

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Macdonald, mentioned by Dr. Johnson in his Journey to the Hebrides, p. 167, who was served with a plentiful meal of salt meat; and, when thirst made him clamorous for drink, a cup was let down to him in the dungeon, which, on lifting the cover, he found to be empty!

MACHIAVEL'S OBSERVATION.

It is observable, that Machiavel employs a whole chapter designedly, to prove, that revolutions in states are often presaged by *prodigies*, the causes of which he professeth himself unable to assign; unless they may be attributed to some spirits and intelligences in the air, which give the world notice of such things to come. See Machiav. Disput. l. i. c. 56.

MAHOMET VIEWING DAMASCUS.

The Arabian false prophet, viewing the delicious and pleasurable situation of Damascus, would not enter that city, but turned away from it with this exclamation: "There is but one paradise for man; and I am determined to have mine in the other world." *mutatis mutandis*, how becoming this for a Christian in time of temptation!—See Maundrell, p. 121.

MARRIAGE.

1. Vincent le Blanc, in his Travels, p. 386, tells us, that in three instances, within his own knowledge, an emerald discovered the incontinency of its wearer, by breaking, when worn in a ring upon the finger. "Such," says he, "is the virtue of this stone, if it be good and fine, and of the old mine." —It is a pity but that there was an emerald of *the old mine* in every wedding-ring.

2. When the subject of *catechising* was before the synod of Dort, one of the Swiss deputies told the synod, that the custom in his country was, for all parties intending matrimony to appear before their minister, who examined them as to their proficiency in their catechism, having power to defer the marriage till it was such as he could approve. "I was much affected to this course," says Hales, "when I heard it; and the synod shall be ill-advised, if they make no use of it." Letters to Sir D. Carleton, p. 11.

MEMORY.

One considerable step towards remembering things worth remembrance, is to forget things which are not so.

METHODISTS.

1. A friend of mine having asked a lady of piety and judgment her opinion of a Methodist teacher; "He will soon," said she, "by great *humility* become the head of a sect and damn all the rest of the world in the very spirit of charity."

2. The Scriptures mention an *assurance of faith*, which our church, in her homilies, calls "a sure trust and confidence that our sins are forgiven," &c. The methodistical assurance is an internal feeling, an assurance of *sense*. Now *faith* and *sense* are quite different things. In the one case, the assurance is an inference drawn from the divine promises applied to ourselves; in the other, it is an immediate operation of the spirit, a kind of revelation made nobody knows how, and of which we have no evidence but the person's own assertion.

3. An ingenious French author (Boursault) speaking of the humility of the Friars, and the manner in which it is made to serve their interest, says, they are like pitchers, which *stoop* only in order to get *filled*.

MIDDLETON (DR.)

"My attention to the classics," says Middleton, "has made me very squeamish in my Christian studies." The doctor seems to have been in the case of the comet mentioned by Dr. Zach, p. 6, of a paper delivered to the University of Oxford, when he was admitted to a degree there, in Feb. 1786. "The retardation of the comet, compared to its period, may clearly be put to the account of the attraction and perturbation he has undergone in the region of Jupiter and Saturn."

MIDDLETON AND HOADLEY.

There was a very scarce book supposed to be written with force against miracles. Middleton had long searched for it in vain. Hoadley was in possession of a copy, and furnished him with it. "You are a wicked man," said he, "and will make a bad use of it. Perhaps *I* ought not to give it to you. But—there—take it, and do your worst." This anecdote is in the Bodleian library, as I have been informed by a friend.

MINISTRY.

1. "I hope my younger brethren in the ministry will pardon me," says Dr. Doddridge, "if I entreat their particular attention to this admonition—not to give the main part of their time to the *curiosities* of learning, and only a few fragments of it to their great work, the *cure of souls*; lest they see cause, in their last moments, to adopt the words of dying Grotius, perhaps with much greater propriety than he could use them—*Proh! vitam perdidi operosè nihil agendo!*" Fam. Expos. sect. 14. The doctor does not refer

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to his authority for this anecdote: but his admonition is most excellent. See the *whole improvement*. See also Fam. Exp. vol. i. sect. 14, where another anecdote is mentioned of Grotius; but the author, from whom I took it, did not cite his authority. On the subject of the above admonition of Doddridge, see Norris's Conduct of Human Life.—See Doddridge's Sermons and Tracts i. 264.—Quesnel on Tit. iii. 9: a proper *text* for a sermon on the subject.

2. It often happens to the teachers of philosophy and religion, as it did to Dr. Solander on the mountain. "You must keep moving," says the doctor, "at all events. Whoever sits down will sleep, and whoever sleeps will wake no more." Yet he himself was the first who found the inclination against which he had warned others, to be irresistible, and insisted upon being suffered to take a nap, though he had just told the company that to sleep was to perish. See Hawkesworth, i. 48.

3. "Reason *ought* to direct us," says lord C., "but it seldom *does*. And he who addresses himself singly to another man's reason, without endeavoring to engage his heart in his interest also, is no more likely to succeed than a man who should apply only to a king's *nominal* minister, and neglect his *favorite*." The illustration is just and beautiful; and the observation deserves the notice of every one, whose employment is to win men to faith and righteousness. Dry reasoning, though ever so solid, will not do alone. See Letters, II. 54. cxxix.

4. Apply to a faithful and vigilant clergy

———Nunquam, custodibus illis,
Nocturnum stabulis furem, incursusque luporum,
Aut impacatos a tergo horrebis Iberos.
GEORG. iii. 406.

———Who for the fold's relief
Will prosecute with cries the nightly thief,
Repulse the prowling wolf, and hold at bay
The mountain robbers rushing to the prey.
DRYDEN, 616.

5. Original corruption appears in as many different shapes as the fabulous Proteus of the ancients, while it exerts itself in the different passions of sinful men, transforming them, for the time, into various kinds of beasts.—

Tum variæ illudent species atque ora ferarum,
Fiet enim subito sus horridus, atraque tigris,
Squamosusque draco, et fulvâ cervice leæna;
Sed quanto ille magis formas se vertet in omnes,
Tanto, nate, magis contende tenacia vincla.

Various forms assume, to cheat thy sight,
And with vain images of beasts affright,
With foamy tusks will seem a bristly boar,
Or imitate the lion's angry roar;
But thou, the more he varies forms, beware
To strain his fetters with a stricter care.
DRYDEN, 587.

So speaks Wisdom to her children, as well as Cyrene to her son Aristeus, Georg. iv. 411.—To accomplish this work happily, celestial influences are necessary, which are conferred in one case, no less than in the other:

Hæc ait, et liquidum ambrosiæ diffundit odorem,
Quo totum nati corpus perduxit; at illi
Dulcis compositis spiravit crinibus aura,
Atque habilis membris venit vigor.

This said, with nectar she her son anoints,
Infusing vigor through his mortal joints:
Down from his head the liquid odors ran;
He breath'd of heav'n, and look'd above a man.
DRYDEN, 599

6. With regard to men's principles, we should always put the best construction on dubious cases, and treat those as *friends* to Christianity, who are not avowed and declared *enemies*. By so doing, we may perhaps save a person from really apostatising; his doubts and prejudices may be overcome; and what was wanting in him may be perfected. But, if we suppose and treat him as an enemy, we take a ready way to make him one, though he were not such before. Besides that the addition of a new name, especially if it be a name of eminence, to the catalogue of infidels strengthens that party, and weakens the faith of many, who build it on authority. "He that is not against us, is on our part." Mark, ix. 40.—See Doddridge in loc. and see Life of Sir Thomas Brown, by Johnson, ad fin.

7. Happy the minister, whose days are spent in teaching heavenly truths; his nights in acquiring the knowledge of them, by study and devotion!—

Et quantum longis carpent armenta diebus,
Exiguâ tantum gelidus ros nocte reponit.
GEORG. ii. 201.

8. The necessity of a kind and gentle manner in him who instructs or reproves another, and the sad effect of a contrary temper, are well set forth by Jerome—*Nihil est fœdius præceptore furioso, qui, cum debeat esse mansuetus et humilis ad omnes, diverso torvo vultu, tremen tibus labiis, effrenatis convitiis, clamore perstrepitat: errantes non tam ad bonum retrahit quam ad malum suâ sævitiâ præcipitat.* Cited by Dieterich, i. 33.—Nothing is more unseemly than a passionate instructor; who, when he ought to be an example of gentleness and humility to all, is distinguished on the contrary by fierce looks, trembling lips, intemperate noise, and unbridled revilings. Such a man does not by persuasion recall to righteousness those who wander, but by harshness precipitates them into evil.

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9. A Christian (a minister especially) should live and act with that disposition for which George Grenville is celebrated by E. Burke.—"He took public business not as a duty which he was to fulfil, but as a pleasure he was to enjoy; and he seemed to have no delight out of this house, except in such things as some way related to the business that was to be done within it." Speech 25. The sentence preceding is—"With a masculine understanding and a stout and a resolute heart, he had an application undissipated and unwearied."

10. Mrs. Siddons, the famous actress, receiving many invitations to the houses of the great and opulent, excused herself from accepting any of them, because her time was due to the public, that she might prepare herself in the most perfect manner to appear before them, for their entertainment.—When a clergyman is invited to spend his hours at card-playing or chit-chat meetings, has he not an apology to make of the same kind, but of a more important and interesting nature? and, if he be deficient in the duties of *his* profession for want of so excusing himself, will not Mrs. Siddons rise up in judgment against him, and condemn him?

MOULTING.

The Heathen philosophers allowed human nature to be fallen from original rectitude, and sunk into a weak, drooping, and sickly state, which they called πτεροῤῥυσις the *moulting* of the soul's wings.—A just and beautiful image: the old feathers drop off, to make way for a new plumage.

MUSIC.

When Agamemnon set out for Troy, Homer tells us, he committed his wife to the care of a *musician*, as the best of guardians and preceptors. Nor could the adulterer Ægysthus seduce her, till he had taken off the musician, whose instruction, while he lived, kept the princess in the path of virtue. —Odyss. iii. 267.—How different, in those days, must the character of a musician, and the use of music have been, from their character and use at present!

NATURE.

1. Mary Magdalene, like the heliotrope, followed the *sun* of righteousness in his diurnal course. She attended him to his evening retreat, and met his rising lustre in the morning.

> But one, the lofty follower of the sun,
> Sad, when he sets, shuts up her yellow leaves,
> Drooping all night; and, when he warm returns,
> Points her enamor'd bosom to his ray.
> THOMSON.*

2. The mind, that has been subject to the fires of wantonness, becomes, like wood burnt to charcoal, apt upon every occasion to kindle and burn again.

3. A bone that is calcined so as the least force will crumble it, being immersed in oil, will grow firm again. Thus, in the figurative language of Scripture, the bones which by sorrow and affliction for sin are "burnt up as it were a firebrand," by pardon and grace are restored to their strength, "flourish, and are made fat."

4. Some persons, who have a great deal of sharp and pungent satire in their tempers, do not discover it unless they are highly provoked; as in the evaporation of human blood by a gentle fire the salt will not rise.

5. Eels, for want of exercise, are fat and slimy. For this reason, perhaps, fish without fins and scales were forbidden the Israelites; and the necessity of exercise, both for the body and the mind, might be the moral intended.

6. Stall-fed oxen, crammed fowls, and high-feeding Christians, are often diseased in their livers. No animal can be wholesome food that does not use exercise.—See Buchan.

7. The rule which physicians lay down for nurses had been a good one for the fanatical holders-forth in the last century, viz. never to give suck after fasting: the milk, in such case, having an acescency very prejudicial to the constitution of the recipient.

8. Had man persevered in innocence, none of the creatures would have hurt him, and it is possible all might have ministered to him in one way or other; as, upon occasion, the ravens were made to do to the prophet.

9. It was the saying of a great general, that there should be some time between a soldier's dismission and his death; and it has been observed of the most furious polemical writers, as Bellarmine, and others, that they have spent the latter part of their lives in pious meditation. Thus huntsmen tell us, that a fox, when escaped from the dogs, after a hard chase, always walks himself cool, before he earths.—See Floyer and Baynard on Cold Baths, p. 328.

10. Providence hath afforded us an unusual and special instance of the brevity of life in the ephemeron, whose duration is from six in the evening till eleven. At the beginning of its life it sheds its coat, and spends the rest of its short time in frisking over the waters, on which the female drops her eggs,

* See Evelyn's "Sylva," p. 37, which suggested the thought.

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and the male his sperm to impregnate them. Having thus served their generation, and provided for the continuance of the species, they die and are turned again to their dust: and all this in five or six hours.—

——Here, fond man,
Behold thy pictur'd life!
Vide SWAMMERDAM, Ephem. Vit.

11. Noxious creatures, in proportion as they are so, teach us care, diligence, and wit: weasels, kites, &c. induce us to watchfulness; thistles and moles, to good husbandry; lice oblige us to cleanliness in our bodies; spiders, in our houses; and the moth, in our clothes. Things often become hurtful, not of necessity, but by accident, through our own negligence or mistake. Let this be applied, in the moral world, to the concerns of our souls, and of the church.

12. There are men whom nothing but hell fire flashing in their faces can rouse from sin and sensuality; as I have seen a fellow driving a fat boar, with a lantern and a bundle of straw, to burn a wisp under his nose, as often as he lay down in the mire: when he feels his beard singed, he gets up, and goes forward.

13. After having composed and delivered a sermon, I have often thought of, and repeated, the following lines of Thomson—

Be gracious, Heav'n! for now laborious man
Has done his part. Ye fost'ring breezes, blow!
Ye soft'ning dews, ye tender show'rs, descend!
And temper all, thou world-reviving sun,
Into the perfect year! SPRING, ver. 48.

14. A faithful pastor, when leaving a flock of whom he had long had the care, might exclaim in these words of Eve in Milton, spoken on being told that she must quit Eden——

——O flow'rs,
My early visitation and my last
At ev'n, which I bred up with tender hand
From the first op'ning bud, and gave you names;
Who now shall rear you to the sun, or rank
Your tribes, and water from th' ambrosial fount?

15. The reproaches of an enemy often serve to quicken a man in his Christian course, as in Siberia they join a large dog to a rein-deer in their sledges, that the latter may be urged on by the bark of the former. —See Travels of the Jesuits, by Lockman, ii. p. 155.

16. The manner in which man resembles his Maker is thus described by an ancient Bramin: "Figure to yourself a million of large vessels quite filled with water, on which the sun darts his luminous rays. This beautiful planet, though single in its kind, multiplies itself in some measure, and paints itself totally, in a moment, on each of these vessels, so that a very perfect resemblance of it is seen in them all. Now our bodies are these vessels filled with water; the sun is the image of the Supreme Being; and the figure of the sun, painted on each of these vessels, is a natural representation enough of the human soul, created after the image of God himself." Ibid. p. 248.

17. The passions, when in the most violent agitation, may be allayed by the consideration, of hell torments; as wine, when it ferments, ready to burst the hoops of its vessel, is calmed and quieted at once by the application of a match dipped in *sulphur*.

18. The Chinese physicians never prescribe bleeding, but allay the heat of the blood by abstinence, diet, and cooling herbs; saying, that, if the pot boil too fast, it is better to subduct the fuel, than lade out the water.

19. Persecution is contrary to the very nature and design of religion, which is to effect the conversion of the soul without hurting the body; as lightning injures not the scabbard, when it melts the sword.

20. Vicious examples are most noxious when set off and recommended by the charms of oratory or poetry; as some poisonous plants growing on a mountain in China are said to kill only when they are in *flower*.

21. Naturalists tell us of harts and hinds, that, in crossing a piece of water, the hart, as the strongest, swimmeth first, to break the force of the stream, and the hind, as being weaker, followeth reclining her head on his back. Woman is the weaker vessel, and standeth in need of man to be her conductor through life; that, under his guidance, she may stem the torrent of the world, and reach, in safety, the shore of eternity. "Let her be as the loving hind, and pleasant roe;" and let her welfare and security be equally attended to by her husband.

22. Husbandmen are careful continually to stir and loosen the earth about the roots of plants. Otherwise it grows dry and hard, and ministers no nutriment. The mind will do the same unless exercised, and will starve the virtuous principles planted in it. Our Lord applies this, in the parable of the fig-tree.—"I will *dig* about it."

Est etiàm ille labor curandis vitibus alter,
Cui nunquam exhausti satis est. Namque omne quotannis
Terque quaterque solum scindendum, glebaque versis
Æternùm frangenda bidentibus.
GEORG. ii. 397.

To dress thy vines new labor is requir'd,
Nor must the painful husbandman be tir'd:
For thrice, at least, in compass of the year,
Thy vineyard must employ the sturdy steer
To turn the glebe; besides thy daily pain,
To break the clods, and make the surface plain.
DRYDEN, 548.

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23. How fine an application do the following lines of the same poet admit of, to the benefits of *adversity*, and the manner in which the divine husbandman "*purges* every fruitful branch in his VINE, that it may bring forth more fruit!"

Ac jam olim seras posuit cum vinea frondes,
Frigidus et sylvis aquilo decussit honorem,
Jam tum acer curas venientem extendit in annum
Rusticus et curvo Saturni dente relictam
Persequitur vitem attondens, fingitque putando.
GEORG. ii. 403.

Ev'n in the lowest months, when storms have shed
From vines the hairy honors of their head;
Not then the drudging hind his labor ends,
But to the coming year his care extends:
Ev'n then the naked vine he persecutes;
His pruning-knife at once reforms and cuts.
DRYDEN, 558.

So again, a few lines after, the care and diligence necessary to be employed with unremitting assiduity, to the last hour, till the grapes are gathered, and the vintage finally secured—

Jam vinctæ vites; jam falcem arbusta reponunt:
Jam canit extremos effœtus vinitor antes:
Sollicitanda tamen tellus pulvisque movendus,
Et jam maturis metuendus Jupiter uvis.
GEORG. ii. 416.

The vines, now ty'd with many a strength'ning band,
No more the culture of the knife demand;
Glad for his labor past and long employ,
At the last rank the dresser sings for joy:
Yet still he must subdue, still turn the mould,
And his ripe grapes still fear rough storms or piercing cold. WARTON, 499.

Again, the tenderness with which young shoots are to be treated and encouraged—

Ac dum prima novis adolescit frondibus ætas,
Percendum teneris; et dum se lætus ad auras
Palmes agit, laxis per purum immissus habenis,
Ipsa acies nondum falcis tentanda.
GEORG. ii. 362.

But in their tender non-age, while they spread
Their springing leaves and lift their infant head,
And upward while they shoot in open air,
Indulge their childhood, and the nursling spare:
Nor exercise thy rage on new-born life,
But let thy hand supply the pruning-knife.
DRYDEN, 497.

24. The description of the growth of plants in the spring to young and virtuous minds—

Inque novos soles audent se gramina tutò
Credere; nec metuit surgentes pampinus austros,
Aut actum cœlo magnis aquilonibus imbrem:
Sed trudit gemmas, et frondes explicat omnes.
GEORG. ii. 332.

The springing grass to trust this season dares;
No tender vine the gath'ring tempest fears
By the black north or roaring auster roll'd,
But spreads her leaves, and bids her gems unfold.
WARTON, 404.

25. In the work of salvation, as in that of husbandry, man must do his part, and God will not fail to do his.

Multum adeo rastris glebas qui frangit inertes,
Vimineasque trahit crates, juvat arva, neque illum
Flava Ceres alto nequicquam spectat Olympo;
Et qui proscisso quæ suscitat æquore terga
Rursus in obliquum verso perrumpit aratro,
Exercetque frequens tellurem, atque imperat arvis.
GEORG. i. 94.

Much too he helps his labor'd lands, who breaks
The crumbling clods with harrows, drags, and rakes;
Who ploughs across, and back, with ceaseless toil,
Subdues to dust, and triumphs o'er the soil;
Plenty to him, industrious swain! is giv'n,
And Ceres smiles upon his work from heav'n.
WARTON, 114.

26. It is one part of a clergyman's office to deduce, from the sublime doctrines of the Gospel, arguments of consolation, to refresh and renew the afflicted and weary soul. Let the following passage be applied to him in these circumstances:

Et cum exustus ager morientibus æstuat herbis,
Ecce supercilio clivosi tramitis undam
Elicit: illa cadens raucum per lævia murmur
Saxa ciet, scatebrisque arentia temperat arva.
GEORG. i. 107.

Thus when the fiery suns too fiercely play,
And shrivell'd herbs on with'ring stems decay,
The wary ploughman on the mountain's brow
Undams his watery stores; huge torrents flow,
And, rattling down the rocks, large moisture yield,
Temp'ring the thirsty fever of the field.
DRYDEN, 157.

27. He, who is entrusted with the education of youth, should, above all things, in the first place, explore and consider well the different tempers, dispositions, and abilities of his scholars, that they may be trained to the several professions, or arts, for the study of which they are respectively fitted and qualified by nature. This is the advice given by Virgil to his farmer, that he should find out

Et quid quæque ferat regio, et quod quæque recuset.
Hic segetes, illic veniunt felicius uvæ:
Arborei fœtus alibi, atque injussa virescunt
Gramina, &c. GEORG. i. 54.

The culture suited to the sev'ral kinds
Of seeds and plants; and what will thrive and rise,
And what the genius of the soil denies.
This ground with Bacchus, that with Ceres suits,
That other loads the trees with golden fruits;
A fourth with grass unbidden decks the ground.
DRYDEN, 78.

28. When the mind is fatigued with one employment, it may find ease and refreshment by addressing itself to another of a different nature: as land will receive benefit by change of grain, as much as by lying fallow.

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Sic quoque mutatis *requiescunt* fœtibus arva.
GEORG. i. 82.

Thus change of seeds for meagre soils is best;
And earth manur'd not idle, though at rest.
DRYDEN, 120.

29. Virgil, speaking of the husbandman's additional labors occasioned by noxious animals and plants, makes a fine reflection upon the design of Providence in permitting such things.

——Pater ipse colendi
Haud facilem esse viam voluit, primusque per artem
Movit agros, curis acuens mortalia corda;
Nec torpere gravi passus sua regna veterno, &c.
GEORG. i. 121.

The sire of gods and men, with hard decrees,
Forbids our plenty to be bought with ease;
And wills that mortal men, inur'd to toil,
Should exercise, with pains, the grudging soil.
Himself invented first the shining share,
And whetted human industry by care.
Himself did handicrafts and arts ordain;
Nor suffer'd sloth to rust his active reign.
DRYDEN, 183.

30. Civet-cats must be fretted and vexed, before the civet is taken out of the bag; for the more the animal is enraged, the musk is the better.—The only case, I think, wherein fretfulness and rage turn to account, and improve things.

31. Wit under the influence of passion degenerates into malignity, as salt exposed to violent heats will turn *sour* and *bitter*.

32. Some particulars in natural history, though confessedly fabulous, are universally retained and employed as allusions; for which purpose they serve as well as if they were true: *e. g.* the phœnix, as a rarity, and as a beautiful symbol of the resurrection; and the notion of a swan becoming vocal and melodious just before its death. Thus Socrates, as cited by Cicero—"*Itaque commemorat, ut cygni, qui non sine causâ Apollini dicati sunt, sed quod ab eo divinationem habere videantur, quâ* providentes quid in morte boni sit, cum cantu et voluptate moriantur; sic omnibus bonis et doctis esse faciundum." Tuscul. Disputat. i. 30.—As swans, inspired by Apollo with a foresight of the joys of death, die with satisfaction and song; such should be the conduct of the wise and good.

33. "The sun," said Mr. Charron, "is my visible God, as God is my invisible sun."

34. To the conversation of a Christian may be applied what Dr. Cadogan says of a child's *breath*—"It is not enough that it be not offensive; it should be sweet and fragrant, like a nosegay of fresh flowers, or a pail of new milk from a young cow that feeds upon the sweetest grass of the spring: and this as well at first waking in the morning as all the day long."—Essay on Nursing Children, p. 46.

35. Riches, honors, and pleasures, are the *sweets* which destroy the mind's appetite for its heavenly food; poverty, disgrace, and pain, are the *bitters* which restore it.

36. Young trees in a thick forest are found to incline themselves towards that part through which the *light* penetrates; as plants are observed to do in a darkened chamber towards a stream of *light* let in through an orifice, and as the ears of corn do towards the *south*. The roots of plants are known to turn away, with a kind of abhorrence, from whatever they meet with, which is hurtful to them; and, deserting their ordinary direction, to tend, with a kind of natural and irresistible impulse, towards collections of *water* placed within their reach. The plants called *Heliotropæ* turn daily round with the sun, and, by constantly presenting their surfaces to that luminary, seem desirous of absorbing a nutriment from its rays.—Surely all these afford a lesson to man.

37. Mr. Temple, at More-park, kept an eagle, into whose cage, among other provision, a living magpie was one day cast. The servants, next morning, were surprised to find the magpie still alive, who lived a great while very comfortably in that state. The eagle seemed much pleased with him, and was often seen to listen very attentively, and not without some degree of admiration, to his chattering.—So kings formerly reckoned it a piece of state to keep a fool.

38. The injunctions given to the Jews, not to eat any creature which died of itself, seem to have a strict regard to health; and ought, on that account, to be observed by Christians as well as Jews. Buchan's *Domestic Medicine*.—The blood, in these cases, is mixed with the flesh, and soon becomes putrid.

39. To an angry controvertist, endeavoring to puzzle a cause, and to avoid conviction, apply Virgil's description of Cacus—Æn. viii. 252.

Faucibus ingentem fumum (mirabile dictu!)
Evomit, involvitque domum caligine cæcâ,
Prospectum eripiens oculis; glomeratque sub antro
Fumiferam noctem, commistis igne tenebris.

He from his nostrils, and huge mouth, expires
Black clouds of smoke amidst his father's fires;
Gath'ring, with each repeated blast, the night,
To make uncertain aim and erring sight.
DRYDEN, 335.

40. To the metaphysics of Hume, Le Clerc, and Bolingbroke—

Ibant obscuri solâ sub nocte per umbras,
Perque domos Ditis vacuas, et inania regna.
ÆN. vi. 264.

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Obscure they went; through dreary shades that led
Along the waste dominions of the dead.
DRYDEN, 378.

41. To the Arian heresy——

At sæva e speculis tempus dea nacta nocendi,
Ardua tecta petit stabuli, et de culmine summo
Pastorale canit *signum*, cornuque recurvo
Tartaream intendit vocem; quâ protenus omne
Contremuit nemus, et sylvæ intonuere profundæ.
Audiit et Triviæ longè lacus, audiit amnis,
Sulphureâ Nar albus aqua, fontesque Velini:
Et trepidæ matres pressere ad pectra natos.
ÆN. vii. 511.

And now the goddess, exercis'd in ill,
Who watch'd an hour to work her impious will,
Ascends the roof, and to her crooked horn,
Such as was then by Latian shepherds borne,
Adds all her breath: the rocks and woods around
And mountains tremble at th' infernal sound.
The sacred lake of Trivia from afar,
The Veline fountains, and sulphureous Nar
Shake at the baleful blast, the signal of the war.
Young mothers wildly stare, with fear possess'd
And strain their helpless infants to their breast.
DRYDEN, 713.

42. The eyes of swine are turned down towards the earth, so that they never behold the heavens; till laid upon their backs; a method sometimes taken by their keepers, to still their crying.—Apply this to the effects produced by afflictions on worldly-minded men.

43. "April 5, 1772, at midnight, two violent shocks of an earthquake were felt at Lisbon. This earthquake was preceded by the *howling of dogs*, and the *melancholy crowing of cocks*. Immediately was heard a subterranean noise, with *howlings and whistlings*, as in a great storm: this was followed by an horizontal shock," &c.—With what unspeakable horror do these circumstances strike the imagination!

44. In the moral, as in the natural world, many trees, after all possible pains have been taken about them, fail in fruit-time. Happy the Christian husbandman, to whom may be applied what Virgil says of his old Corycian gardener:

Quotque in flore novo pomis se fertilis arbos
Induerat, totidem autumno matura tenebat.
GEORG. iv. 142.

For ev'ry bloom his trees in spring afford,
An autumn apple was by tale restor'd.
DRYDEN, 211.

45. Apply to repentance, a medicine sharp, but salutary, Virgil's account of the citron—

Media fert *tristes* succos, *tardumque* saporem
Felicis mali; quo non præsentius ullum
Auxilium venit, et membris agit atra venena.
GEORG. ii. 126.

Sharp-tasted citrons Median climes produce,
Bitter the rind, but gen'rous is the juice:
A cordial fruit, a present antidote. &c.
DRYDEN, 175.

46. The old school maxim, that "the corruption of one thing is the generation of another," is true in spirituals, as well as in physics. The death of the old man is the life of the new; and from affections carnal and secular, when mortified by the power of religion, spring up holy and heavenly ones, vigorous and active in proportion.

Nigra fere, et presso pinguis sub vomere terra,
Et cui *putre* solum, *namque hoc imitamur* arando,
Optima frumentis; non ullo ex æquore cernes
Plura domum tardis decedere plaustra juvencis.
GEORG. ii. 203.

Fat crumbling earth is fitter for the plough,
Putrid and loose above, and black below:
For ploughing is an imitative toil,
Resembling nature in an easy soil.
No land for seed like this, no fields afford
So large an income to the village lord:
No toiling teams from harvest labor come
So late at night, so heavy laden home.
DRYDEN, 280.

Therefore, as Virgil goes on, ground where wood has grown, and the leaves, &c. have rotted, though of an unpromising appearance, proves fruitful when turned up.—

At rudis enituit, *impulso vomere* campus.

While shines the new-turn'd soil beneath th' invading share. WARTON, 266.

47. There are *minds*, as well as lands, of so harsh and crabbed a disposition that little can be made of them.

Salsa autem tellus, et quæ perhibetur amara,
Frugibus infelix; ea nec mansuescit arando,
Nec Baccho genus, aut pomis sua nomina servat.
GEORG. ii. 238.

Salt earth and bitter are not fit to sow,
Nor will be tam'd or mended with the plough.
Sweet grapes degen'rate there, and fruits declin'd
From their first flav'rous taste, renounce their kind.
DRYDEN, 323.

48. A genius forward, and early ripe, seldom, in the end, answers expectation. Virgil has observed the same thing of land, which throws forth corn too strong at first.—

Ah! nimium ne sit mihi fertilis illa,
Neu se prævalidam primis ostendat aristis!
GEORG. ii. 252.

Let not my land so large a promise boast,
Lest the lank ears in length of stem be lost.
DRYDEN, 341.

49. The character of a universal scholar is apt to dazzle the sight, and to attract an

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bition. But a greater progress is made in literature, when every man takes his part, and cultivates that part thoroughly, with all his powers.—

——————Laudato ingentia rura;
Exiguum colito.—
GEORG. ii. 412.

To larger vineyards praise and wonder yield;
But cultivate a small and manageable field.
WARTON, 495.

50. Inventors and projectors, however wild and visionary, often afford matter, which a wise man will know how to qualify and turn to use, though they did not.—See Account of Settlements in America, i. 65.

51. When a hogshead of sugar is in the highest state of fermentation over the fire, a piece of *butter*, no bigger than a nut, will allay and quiet it in a moment. A teaspoonful of *oil* quieted the ruffled surface of near half an acre of water in a windy day, and rendered it smooth as a looking-glass.—See Dr. Franklin's account, Phil. Trans. lxiv. part ii.—Like the Divine Spirit, oil acts as a bond of peace to the whole mass which is under its influence.

52. The note of the cockoo, though uniform, always gives pleasure, because it reminds us that summer is coming. But that pleasure is mixed with melancholy, because we reflect, that what is coming will soon be going again. This is the consideration which embitters every sublunary enjoyment!—Let the delight of my heart then be in thee, O Lord and Creator of all things, with whom alone is no variableness, neither shadow of changing?

53. The world twines itself about the soul, as a serpent doth about an eagle, to hinder its flight upward, and sting it to death.

54. "The affected gaiety of a wicked man is like the flowery surface of Mount Ætna, beneath which materials are gathering for an eruption, that will one day reduce all its beauties to ruin and desolation."—Irene.

55. The Christian traveller, in his journey through the desert, like Hassan, must be always *awake*, and upon the *watch*.

At that dead hour the silent asp shall creep,
If aught of rest I find, upon my sleep;
Or some swoln serpent twist his scales around,
And wake to anguish with a burning wound.
COLLIN'S Ecl. ii.

56. So manifold are the diseases to which the body of man is become subject, that, in a treatise of a Dr. Richard Banister, 113 diseases are mentioned as incident to the *eyes and eyelids* only. See Biog. Brit.—Whether *the mind's eye* be liable to fewer, may be questioned.

57. The death and resurrection of Christ represent and produce in man a death to sin, and a resurrection to righteousness.—When the sun recedes from the autumnal equinox, he brings on the fall of the leaf, with a general withering and seeming extinction of the vegetable life during the dead of winter; and, when in his annual motion he rises again towards our hemisphere, nature feels a kind of resurrection.—Heylyn's Lectures, ii. 429.

58. It is with a Christian, as with the Sicilian vines.—"An old proprietor," says Swinburne, "informed me, that the strength of the liquor depended on the close pruning of the vine."—Travels in the Sicilies, ii. 240, sect. 33.

59. Dr. Johnson thus speaks of his situation at Rausay: "Such a seat of hospitality amidst the winds and waters fills the imagination with a delightful contrariety of images: without is the rough ocean and the rocky land, the beating billows and the howling storm: within is plenty and elegance, beauty and gaiety, the song and the dancing!" Apply this to the state of a good man's mind amidst the troubles of the world, "rejoicing at tribulation." So sings a poet of *conscience*:

'Tis the warm blaze in the poor herdsman's hut,
That, when the storm howls o'er his humble thatch,
Brightens his clay-built walls, and cheers his soul.
COUNT OF NARBONNE, act iv, sc. 4.

60. It is difficult for a man to suppress a conceit which tickles his own fancy, though he be sure to suffer by the publication of it. Owen, the epigrammatist, had expectations from an uncle, who was a Papist; but he could not resist the charm of the following satirical distich:

An fuerit *Petrus* Romæ, sub judice lis est;
Simonem, Romæ nemo fuisse negat.

The consequence was, that the book was put into the *Index Expurgatorius*, and poor Owen put out of his uncle's will.

PARADISE.

How beautiful this of Shakspere!——

Consideration, like an angel, came
And whipp'd th' offending Adam out of him;
Leaving his body like a Paradise,
T' envelop and contain celestial spirits.

PARTY.

1. In proselyting men to a party, one convert is employed to make more from among

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his old friends and connections; somewhat in the manner in which wild gazelles are caught, by sending into the herd one already *taken* and *tamed*, with a *noose* so fastened to his horns, as to entangle the animal that first approaches to oppose him. Goldsmith, iii. 86.

2. One is apt sometimes to wonder, why the characters, sayings, and writings of some men stand so high in the opinion and esteem of others. The phenomenon may, perhaps, be partly accounted for by the following observation of Dr. Goldsmith:—"It is probable," says he, "there is not in the creation an animal of more importance to a *goose* than a *gander*."

PATIENCE.

1. A surgeon is never more calm and free from passion than when he is about to lance a swelling, or to perform an amputation. If he were not so, he would be likely to miscarry in the operation, and to kill, instead of curing, his patients Let this be applied to the case of a clergyman reproving, or inflicting ecclesiastical censures.—*Ut ad urendum et secandum, sic et ad hoc genus castigandi rarò invitique veniamus. Ira procul absit, cum quâ nihil rectè fieri, nihil consideratè potest.* Cic. Off. i. sect. 38. Like the incision knife, and the caustic, let this species of chastisement be rarely and unwillingly resorted to: in all events let it be inflicted without anger, which in all things is absolutely inconsistent with propriety and deliberation.—See Arnold on Ecclus, xx. 1.

2. The *portraits* of a man of wealth, a man of pleasure, and a man of power, do not excite our envy. Why then should the *originals*, which are made of as corruptible materials, which pass away like shadows, and last not so long as their pictures?

3. Afflictions, when accompanied with grace, alter their nature, as wormwood, eaten with bread, will lose its bitterness. See Arbuthnot on Aliment, p. 15.

4. The bark of a tree contains an oily juice, which, when it is in greater plenty than can be exhaled by the sun, renders the plant evergreen. Such is the state of the man whose virtue is proof against the scorching heats of temptation and persecution: he is "like a green olive-tree," in the courts of the temple; "his leaf shall not wither."

5. Women are generally supposed to be in mind, as well as body, of a more delicate frame than men; yet, in the primitive times, they went unhurt through the hottest flames of persecution: as the utmost force of boiling water is not able to destroy the structure of the tenderest plant, and the lineaments of a white lily will remain after the strongest decoction.

6. An Italian bishop, who had endured much persecution with a calm unruffled temper, was asked by a friend how he attained to such a mastery of himself. "By making a right use of my eyes," said he. "I first look up to heaven, as the place whither I am going to live for ever: I next look down upon the earth, and consider how small a space of it will soon be all that I can occupy or want. I then look round me, and think how many are far more wretched than I am."

7. Regner Lodbrog, imprisoned in a loathsome dungeon, and condemned to be destroyed by venomous serpents, solaced his desperate situation by recollecting and reciting the glorious exploits of his past life. The soul confined in its prison, the body, and infested by destructive passions, should support and comfort itself, by recollecting and celebrating the triumphs of its Redeemer, set forth in the Psalms: so Paul and Silas.—See Taylor's Holy Dying, on *Patience*—the case of the *Gladiators*.

8. The cross which is laid upon us must be borne: if we are impatient, we lose the fruit of it; but if we accept it willingly, and bear it with patience and meek resignation, it is regarded as equivalent to a punishment of our own infliction.

PIETY.

As drawn by Fenelon in a letter to his pupil, the Duke of Burgundy—of whose devotion people had said it was "*sombre, scrupuleue, est qui n'est pas assez proportionnée à son place.*" Melancholy, full of scruples, not sufficiently adapted to his situation.—*Si vous voulez faire honneur à votre pieto, vous ne sauriez trop la rendre douce, simple, commode sociale.*"—If you wish to do honor to your piety, you cannot be too careful to render it sweet and simple, affable and social.—See Maury, 443.

PLEASURE.

1. Surrounded with all the gaities and glories of the court of France, Maintenon and Pompadour both experienced the depredations of melancholy; and declared they were not the happy persons they seemed to be, and that "in all states of life there was a frightful void." The retreats of St. Cyr and Bellevue were the places in which (if ever) they tasted happiness. Ann. Register, 1766. Memoirs of Mad. Pompadour. See a letter of lady M. W. Montague, in which she extols the superior felicity of a milkmaid. These testimonies are curious, and worth noting.

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2. A child is eager to have any toy he sees; but throws it away at the sight of another, and is equally "eager to have *that*. We are most of us *children*, through life; and only change one *toy* for another, from the cradle to the grave.

3. They, who would enjoy health and strength, should follow the rule prescribed by Constantine, in the education of his sons: Consult in your nourishment only the wants of nature, and seek only in the toils of the body the relaxation of the mind. But most of our amusements now are of the sedentary kind, cards, &c. and journeys are performed in the easiest vehicles.

4. People wish for great estates, generally, that they may be enabled by them to live a life of *indulgence*, and follow their *diversions*; which was the very idea formed of this matter by the boy, who said, that if he had the 'squire's estate, he would *eat fat bacon* and *swing all day on farmer Hobson's gate*.—For the different ideas of people of pleasure, Selden tells of the boy, who said, if he were a lord, he would have a great whip as cried *slash*.

5. The colliers, in the north of England, pass most of their time underground. When they emerge into day-light, the only thing they take any pleasure in is *cock-fighting*—as if the sun and air had been made for no other purpose.

6. Let us think of the most exquisite spiritual pleasures we ever felt on earth, and reflect, that those pleasures will be eternal in heaven!

> The gentle spring, that but salutes us here,
> Inhabits *there*, and courts them all the year.

7. We are so made as to be always pleased with somewhat *in prospect*, however distant, or however trivial. Hence the pleasures of planting, sowing, building, raising a family, educating children, &c. The advancement of our minds, in this world, towards that perfection of which they are to be possessed in the next, should be the grand object of our attention.

8. The Spartans wished to their enemies, that they might be seized with a humor of building, and keep a race of horses: the Cretans, that they might be delighted with some evil custom.—See Wanley, 137. Because he, whom pleasure lays hold of, will soon be impotent and of no effect.

PLURALITIES.

An ingenious French author (Boursault) relates the following story.—An Abbé, who had no preferment, exclaiming one day to Boileau against pluralities—"Is it possible," says the ecclesiastic, "that the people you named, who have the reputation of being very learned men, and are such in reality, should be mistaken in their opinion? Unless these would absolutely oppose the doctrine laid down by the apostles, and the directions of councils, must they not be obliged to confess, that the holding several livings at the same time is sinful? I myself am in holy orders, and, be it said without vanity, of one of the best families in Touraine. It becomes a man of high birth to make a figure suitable to it, and yet, I protest to you, that if I can get an abbey, the yearly income of which is only 1000 crowns, my ambition will be satisfied; and be assured, that nothing shall tempt me to alter my resolution."—Some time after, an abbey of 7000 crowns a year being vacant, his brother desired it for him, and was gratified in his request. The winter following he got another of still greater value; and, a third being vacant, he solicited very strongly for this also, and obtained it. Boileau, hearing of these preferments, went and paid his friend a visit. "Mr. Abbé," says he, "where is now that season of innocence and candor, in which you declared that pluralists hazarded their souls greatly?" "Ah! good Boileau," replied the abbé, "did you but know how much pluralities contribute towards living well!"—"I am in no doubt of that," replied Boileau; "but of what service are they, good abbé, towards dying well?"

POISONOUS PLANTS.

Plants have their atmospheres formed of particles emitted from them on all sides. These atmospheres have various effects on those who stay in them: some refresh the spirits, and enliven a man; others bring on a fit of the vapors; and a third sort lay him asleep. Thus it is exactly with *men*, and with *books*. It is reported, that in Brasil, there are trees, which kill those that sit under their shade in a few hours. Beware of pestilential authors and their works.

POMFRET.

An old woman, who showed the house and pictures at Towcester, expressed herself in these remarkable words: "That is Sir Robert Farmer: he lived in the country, took care of his estate, built this house, and paid for it; managed well, saved money, and died rich.—— *That* is his son; he was made a lord, took a place at court, spent his estate, and died a beggar!" A very concise, but full and striking account.

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PREACHING.

1. A church stocked with unpreaching divines is like the city of Nibas in the neighborhood of Thessalonica in Macedonia, where, Ælian tells us, the cocks were all dumb.—Lib. xv. cap. 20.

2. It is as necessary for a preacher, in the composition of his sermon, to take into consideration the passions and prejudices of his audience, as it is for an archer to choose his arrows with an eye to the wind and weather.

3. Preachers would do eminent service to religion, if, instead of laboring to prove plain points, which nobody disputes, such as the obligations of duty, they would employ their powers in stating its measures, discovering the various ways men have of eluding it, and showing them their conformity or nonconformity to it.

4. The art of *fine speaking* is one thing, that of *persuasion* another. The prudent and affectionate address of a parent or a friend, however plain and unpolished, will do more towards inclining the will, than all the tropes and figures, the logic and rhetoric of the schools.

5. "Scarce anything," says Dr. Trapp, "has of late years been more prejudicial to religion, than the neglect of the *theological* part of it, properly so called: and it is very greatly to be lamented, that some writers, even of our own church, out of an undue fervor in opposing some erroneous doctrines of Calvin, have run into the other extreme, and have too little regarded the necessary doctrines of religion." Pref. to Preservative, p. 5.

6. To preach *practical* sermons, as they are called, *i. e.* sermons upon virtues and vices, without inculcating those great Scripture truths of redemption, grace, &c. which alone can incite and enable us to forsake sin, and follow after righteousness, what is it but to put together the wheels, and set the hands of a watch, forgetting the *spring* which is to make them all go?

7. St. Austin did not think himself bound to abstain from all ornaments of style, because St. Paul said, that he preached the Gospel "not with the enticing words of man's wisdom." *Non prætermitto istos numeros clausularum.*—I do not neglect the music of my periods.—He studied to make his language sweet and harmonious.—See Donne's Sermons, p. 48.

8. Tully's censure, passed on immoral philosophers, comes home to the business and bosoms of wicked clergymen. *Ut enim, si grammaticum se professus quispiam barbare loquatur; aut si absurde canat is, qui se haberi velit musicum, hoc turpior sit, quod in eo ipso peccet, cujus profitetur scientcam: sic philosophus in vitæ ratione peccans, hoc turpior est, quod in officio, cujus magister esse volt, labitur; artemque vitæ professus, delinquit in vita.*—See the whole passage.—*Tust. Quæst.* lib. ii. sect. 4. non procul ab init. Glasg. p. 58.—As a grammarian, who should speak barbarous language, or a musician, who should sing out of tune, would be the more despicable for failing in the very art in which he professed to excel; so the philosopher, whose conduct is vicious or immoral, becomes an object of greater disgrace; since, while inculcating the duties of life, he fails in their performance; and, undertaking to reform the lives of others, sins in the regulation of his own.

9. Terse moral essays, opposed to the overflowings of ungodliness, remind one of the Chinese, who, in tempestuous weather, throw feathers into the sea, to quiet the storm, and drive away the devil. See Travels of the Jesuits, by Lockman. ii. 58.

10. It is much to the honor of the Athenians, that they had a law among them, obliging every man, who found a stranger that had lost his way, to direct him into it again. A Christian is under obligation, by the divine law, to do the same in spirituals.

11. At the critical moment of that night, when Count Lestock, in 1741, was going to conduct the Princess Elizabeth to the palace, to dethrone the regent, and put her in possession of the Russian empire, fear preponderated, and the princess refused to set out. The count then drew from his pocket two cards, on one of which she was represented under the tonsure in a convent, and himself on a scaffold: on the other, she appeared ascending the throne, amidst the acclamations of the people. He laid both before her, and bade her choose her situation. She chose the throne, and before morning was empress of all the Russias. A preacher should take the same method with his people, which the count took with the princess. Before the eyes of those who halt between God and the world, through fear or any other motive, should be placed pictures of the joys of heaven, and the pains of hell. It remains only for them to choose right, and proceed to action. Success will be the consequence.

12. When the Romans heard Cicero, says Fenelon, they cried out, *O le bel orateur!* O what a fine orator! But when the Athenians heard Demosthenes, they called out, *Allons, battons Philippe!*—Come on, down with Philip! The difference between the eloquence of the Grecian and that of the

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Roman orator is here expressed in a manner equally judicious and lively: and this is the true criterion of a *sermon*, as well as of an *oration*. The exclamation of the audience should be, not, *O le bel orateur!* but, *Allons, battons Philippe!* Let us attack such a *passion*, such an *appetite*, such an *error;* let us oppose the *world*, the *flesh*, and the *devil!* Demosthenes therefore is the author who should be studied and imitated by preachers.

PREDESTINATION.

It is much to be wished, that Christians would apply themselves to obey the Gospel, instead of endeavoring to discover the designs of God concerning man before man was created, or the precise manner in which he touches the hearts of those who are converted. Salvation may be obtained without knowledge of this sort: besides, the wit of man may not be able to solve the difficulties that may be started on every side of these questions; upon which, obscure and intricate as they are, if decisions are made and enforced as articles of faith, schisms and factions must ensue. But the mischief is done, and there is no remedy; divines are therefore obliged to explain their own sentiments, and oppugn those of their adversaries, respectively, as well as they are able. Thus strifes are increased, time lost, and edification neglected.

PRINGLE (SIR JOHN.)

He was particularly fond of Bishop Pearce's Commentary and Notes. He was brought up in principles of virtue and piety; he was seduced to deism, but brought back again by an attentive consideration of the evidence; and *settled* by discovering that the doctrine of the Trinity made no part of the Scriptures; that the mercy of God was not confined to a few, exclusive of others, and that future punishments were not eternal.—See Kippis's account prefixed to his Speeches. This is a way of making matters easy: a man strikes out of the Gospel what he does not like, and then is graciously pleased to profess himself a believer of the rest. After this fashion, the religion certainly bids fair to become *universal*. "Thus," says Kippis "he added another name to the catalogue of the *excellent* and *judicious* persons who have gloried in being *rational Christians!*"

PROSPERITY.

1. Prosperity too often has the same effect on a *Christian*, that a calm at sea hath on a Dutch mariner, who frequently, it is said, in those circumstances, ties up the rudder, gets drunk, and goes to sleep.

2. In describing Sallust, at one time the loud advocate of public spirit, and afterwards sharing in the robberies of Cæsar, Warburton expresses this variation of character by the following imagery:

"No sooner did the warm aspect of good fortune shine out again, but all those exalted ideas of virtue and honor, raised, like a beautiful kind of frost work, in the cold season of adversity, dissolved and disappeared."

PROVIDENCE.

1. Sometimes it pleaseth God to punish men for smaller sins in this life; which would not be, unless greater punishments were prepared for greaters sins in the next. There must either be a future day of judgment and retribution, or no God who governs the world.

2. There is a certain part in the great drama, which God intends each of us to act; but we often take a fancy to change it for some other, by which means we become miserable or ridiculous. "It is an uncontrolled truth," says Swift, "that no man ever made an ill figure who understood his own talents, nor a good one who mistook them." See Ascham, p. 166.

3. The schemes of worldly politicians are so many spiders'-webs, which, when woven with infinite care and pains, are swept away at a stroke, by Providence, with *the besom of destruction*.

Omnia sunt hominum tenui pendentia filo,
Et subito casu, quo valuere, ruunt.
OVID.

Hung on a thread, man's perishable pride
Trembles, and falls as fate and chance decide.

4. What inextricable confusion must the world for ever have been in, but for the variety which we find to obtain in the faces, the voices, and the handwritings of men! No security of person, no certainty of possession, no justice between man and man, no distinction between good and bad, friends and foes, father and child, husband and wife, male and female. All would have been exposed to malice, fraud, forgery, and lust. But now, every man's face can distinguish him in the light, his voice in the dark, and his handwriting can speak for him though absent, and be his witness to all generations. Did this happen by chance, or is it not a manifest, as well as an admirable indication of a divine superintendence? See Derham, i. 310.

5. When we peruse the history of Israel in the Scriptures, we behold the working of Providence in every event. The history

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of other nations would appear in the same light, if the same person were to write it, and unfold in like manner the grounds and reasons of his proceeding with *them*. At present we must learn as much as we can, by an application of parallel cases. So with regard to individuals.

6. We easily persuade ourselves that a cause is good, when its patrons are victorious, and have the disposition of things in their hands. Cicero, pleading before Cæsar, for the life of Ligarius, says, that, while the civil war was carrying on, *Causa tum dubia, quòd erat aliquid in utraque parte, quod probari posset: nunc melior certe ea judicanda est, quam etiam dii adjuverint.* The cause was then doubtful, since there was, in each party, something to claim our approbation: but now undoubtedly that cause must be considered as the better, in whose favor Heaven itself has declared.

7. "Such a respect," says Plutarch, "had the Romans for religion, that they made all their affairs depend solely on the pleasure of the gods, never suffering, no, not in their greatest prosperity, the least neglect or contempt of their ancient rites, or oracles; being fully persuaded, that it was of much greater importance to the public welfare, that their magistrates and generals should reverence and obey the gods, than if they conquered and subdued their enemies." In Vitâ Marcell. iii. 141.

PROVOCATIONS TO BE AVOIDED.

It was well said by Dr. Whichcot—"If I provoke a man, he is the worse for my company: if I suffer myself to be provoked by him, I shall be the worse for his."

RECTITUDE.

Mr. Harris observes, from M. Antoninus, that *rectitude* is ascribed to actions, as denoting the directness of their progression *right onward*, and quotes from a sonnet of Milton—

Yet I argue not
Against Heaven's hand or will; nor bate one jot
Of heart or hope; but still bear up, and steer
Right onward.—

Three Discourses, 306.

RELIGION.

"Religion, viewed at a proper point of sight, hath a very beautiful face. It is innocent, and very careful not to hurt anybody, or, doing it inadvertently, is uneasy till it hath made him amends. It always means well, and does as well as ever it can. If it offends, it wants to be reconciled; confesses its faults, prays to be forgiven, is desirous to be informed; is less adventurous; more circumspect; sensible of its own frailty; forgives everybody; abounds in good will; delights in good offices; keeps itself clean; is pleased with itself; looks cheerful; is cheerful! Why, then, will any one be so indiscreet, as to dress this lovely form in such a frightful manner, as to terrify the beholder, instead of inviting him to embrace it?"—Dr. Newton's Sermon on the Ministerial Duty, p. 30.

RETIREMENT.

1. The din of politics in all companies makes one sometimes envy the Carthusian monks, of whom it is said—"They led a life of tranquility amidst the general tumults which distracted the rest of the world, of which they hardly heard the rumor; and knew nothing of the mighty sovereigns of the earth, but by name, when they prayed for them."—Volt. Hist. iv. 128.

2. The following simile of the same writer, upon a subject of the same kind, is extremely just and beautiful.—"The artificers and merchants, whose humble station had protected them from the ambitious fury of the great, were like ants, who dug themselves peaceable and secure habitations, while the eagles and vultures of the world were tearing one another in pieces." iii. 25.

3. The retired situation of the old solitary saints, and their moping and musing way of life, threw them frequently into melancholy and enthusiasm, and sometimes into phrensy and madness; and, indeed, there are few heads strong enough to bear perpetual solitude, and a confinement to the same place, the same objects, the same occupations, and the same little circle of action; and when to all this is added want of proper food and proper sleep, it is no wonder if a man lose his senses. Jortin's Sermons, iii. 240.

4. Retirement is necessary at times, to relieve from the cares of life; as the Indians, in some countries, at evening bury themselves in the sand, to escape from the musquitoes.—Mosely on Tropical Diseases, p. 20.

N. B. When a man retreats into the country for health, he should go to some distance from the usual scene of business, and cut off the communication with care and anxiety. Ibid. 39.

5. Though retirement is my dear delight, says Melmoth, yet upon some occasions I think I have too much of it; and I agree with Balzac, "Que la solitude est certainement une belle chose; mais il y a plaisir d'avoir quelqu'un à qui on puisse dire de tems en tems, que la solitude est une belle chose."

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Fitzosborn, 122. Solitude is certainly a fine thing? but there is a pleasure in having some one whom we may tell from time to time, that solitude is a fine thing. It is the disadvantage of retirement and solitude, that men fall into erroneous and fantastical opinions and systems, for want of sifting and proving them in conversation and friendly debate. This is well stated in Letter lxxiv. p. 365. W. Law was a remarkable instance of it.

6. Conversation should certainly be more practised than it is, on subjects of science, morality, and religion. The less a man converses, the less he will be *able* to converse. Selkirk, who spent three years alone on the Island of Juan Fernandes, had almost lost the use of his speech. Thuanus used to say, reading was not of that use to him as conversing with learned men, which he did daily. Why was the style of Sallust artificial and dark, when that of Cæsar and Cicero was natural and plain? Because the two latter, by being accustomed to harangue senates and popular assemblies, gave themselves to use such speech as *the meanest should well understand, and the wisest best allow:* whereas Sallust wrote in his study, and from books only. Sir John Cheeke, in Ascham, p. 339.—Cited also by Lord Monboddo.

RICH TO ASSIST THE POOR.

Epaminondas, who himself had nothing to give, sent a friend in necessity to a rich citizen, with orders to ask 1000 crowns in his name. His reason being demanded by the citizen—"Why," said Epaminondas, "it is because this honest man is poor and you are rich." *That* he thought was a sufficient reason.

SAYINGS.

1. Adrian, the coadjutor of Ximenes in the government of Castile, was much disturbed at the libels which flew about against them. Ximenes was perfectly easy. "If," said he, "we take the liberty to act, others will take the liberty to talk, and write: when they charge us falsely, we may laugh; when truly, we must amend."

2. Dr. Green of St. John's College, trying to skate, got a terrible fall backwards. "Why doctor," said a friend who was with him, "I thought you had understood the business better." "Oh," replied the doctor, "I have the theory perfectly; I want nothing but the practice." How many of us, in matters of a much higher and more important nature, come under the doctor's predicament!

3. "You have the word, and we have the sword," said Weston to the reformed divines in Queen Mary's time.

4. Cardinal Wolsey's reflection, made just before he expired, should be laid to heart by every man, when tempted to bestow upon the world, or any thing on it, that affection and service which are due to God.—"Had I but served God as diligently as I have served the king, HE would not have given me over in my grey hairs."

5. To those, who would win men to religion by fire and faggot, may be applied the remark of the Earl of Huntley, when protector Somerset marched into Scotland with 18,000 men, to effect a marriage between the young queen of that kingdom and Edward VI.—"That he disliked not the match, but hated the manner of wooing."

6. A person coming into Melancthon's house, found him holding a book with one hand, and rocking a child with the other. Upon his expressing some surprise, Melancthon made such a pious discourse to him, about the duty of a father, and the state of grace in which children are with God, that this stranger went away, says Bayle, much more edified than he came.

7. Very striking is St. Augustine's reflection, on the effect produced by our Lord's answer to those who came apprehend him.—"I am he. Εγω ειμι" *Quid judicaturus faciet, qui judicandus hoc fecit!*—How will he act as a judge, who acted thus as a criminal!

8. Melancthon, when he went to the conferences at Spire, in 1529, made a little journey to Bretten, to see his mother. The good woman asked him, what she must believe, amidst so many disputes? and repeated to him her prayers, which contained nothing superstitious. "Go on, mother," said he, "to believe and pray as you have done, and never trouble yourself about controversies."—The advice of a wise and a good man.

9. Three or four English gentlemen on their travels through Italy, happening to be at St. Marino, on a fish day, applied to a butcher, to procure for them, if possible, a joint of veal. The butcher said he would do anything to oblige them, but could not kill for them, as nobody would buy but themselves. They continued very importunate, and offered to take any quantity. "Well then, gentlemen," said the fellow at last, "I will venture to kill a calf; and, if you will take half of it to-day, I will trust to THE REPUBLIC for the other half to-morrow."

10. Bajazet, upon the march, at the head of his mighty army, after the capture of his favorite city Sebastia, by the enemy, hearing a poor shepherd playing on his pipe on the side of a hill, exclaimed,—"Happy shep-

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herd, who hast no Sebastia to lose!"—Knolles.

11. Mahomet II. after he had taken Constantinople, being reproached for spending all his time with Irene, a captive Greek, forgetting his intended conquests, and neglecting the concerns of empire, ordered a convention of all his great men; produced Irene before them; asked them, if they could blame him, when they beheld her? and then, to convince them he could master his passions, seizing her by the hair with his left hand, chopped off her head with his right.

12. Very shrewd and sensible observations are often made by persons disordered in their senses. Dr. Heylyn used to apply, upon this occasion, an old Spanish proverb, which says, that light makes its way into a dark room, through a CRACK.

13. "Nec vero ego," says Sadolet, "aliud medius fidius statuo esse sapientiam, quam meminisse unumquemque quid sui officii et muneris sit, idque cum fide et cum integritate præstare." Epist. p. 21.—That, that alone I deem to be wisdom, which enables a man to keep present to his mind a sense of his duty, and with integrity and firmness to perform it.

14. Many of those fighting heroes, so celebrated in story, may be compared, as Mr. Boyle observes, to worthless *gnats*, considerable only for their *noise* and *stings* with which they disturb men's *rest*.

15. Valeria being asked, why, after the death of her husband Servius, she would not marry again? answered, "Ideo hoc facio quia Servius meus, licet aliis mortuus sit, apud me vivit, vivetque semper."—This I do, because my Servius, though dead to others, lives, and will ever live, to me."—See Dieterich. ii. 435.

16. Dr. Johnson being asked what he thought of the Scotch universities: "Why, sir," said he, "they are like a besieged town, where every man has a mouthful, and no man has a bellyful."

17. The same person, being asked by some Scotch philosophers, whether he thought a man would exist by choice, or necessity? replied—"If an Englishman, by choice; if a Scotchman, by necessity."

18. Rochester said, with astonishment, "that he did not know how it was, but Lord Dorset might do anything, and yet was never to blame." Every body excused whom every body loved for the tenderness of his nature.—Royal and Noble Authors, p. 96.

19. On Lord Dorset's promotion, King Charles, having seen Lord Craven (a proverb for officious whisperers to men in power) pay his usual tribute to him, asked the former, what the latter had been saying? The earl gravely replied, "Sir, my Lord Craven did me the honor to whisper, but I did not think it good manners to listen."—This was exactly in the spirit of Charles's own witticisms. Ibid. p. 97.

20. When the same Lord Dorset was dying, Congreve, who had been to visit him, being asked how he left him, replied, "Faith, he slabbers more wit than other people have in their best health." Ibid. p. 97.

21. Shaftesbury (author of the Characteristics) attempting to speak on the bill for granting counsel to prisoners in cases of high treason, was confounded, and for some time could not proceed; but recovering himself, he said, "What now happened to him, would serve to fortify the arguments for the bill—If he, innocent, and pleading for others, was daunted at the augustness of such an assembly, what must a man be, who should plead before them for his life?" Ibid. p. 106.

22. When the lieutenant of the Tower offered Strafford a coach, lest he should be torn to pieces by the mob, in passing to execution; he replied, "I die to please the people, and I will die in their own way."—Royal and Noble Authors, p. 163.

23. Henry Lord Falkland being brought early into the house of commons, and a grave senator objecting to his youth, and "to his not looking as if he had sown his wild oats;" he replied with great quickness, "Then I am come to the properest place, where are so many geese to pick them up." Ibid. p. 221.

24. "My dear Pouilly," says Bolingbroke, "of all the men I ever knew in my life, there are but three fit to take upon them the task of governing nations—you and I and Pope."—Pope had resigned his understanding to Bolingbroke; who was so pleased with the sacrifice, that he thought Pope, of all the men in the world, qualified to be a *prime minister*. This was most undoubtedly Pope's title; and it is natural for us to suppose, that M. Pouilly de Champeaux held his estate by the same kind of tenure.—The letter containing this very curious passage was lately published in the preface to an edition of the works of Champeaux. On the same principle of vanity, Bolingbroke palmed upon his friends a silly mistress of his for a wit, because she repeated good things which he had said, and pretended to have forgotten. *Ah la pauvre humanité!*

25. Repentance and renovation consist not in the wish, or purpose, but in the actual operations of a good life. As Dryden observes, that speculative painting, without the assistance of manual operation, can never attain to

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perfection, but slothfully languishes; for it was not with his tongue that Apelles performed his noble works.

26. The ascent to greatness, however steep and dangerous, may entertain an active spirit with the consciousness and exercises of its own power; but the possession of a throne could never yet afford a lasting satisfaction to an ambitious mind. This melancholy truth was felt and acknowledged by Severus. Fortune and merit had, from an humble station, elevated him to the first place among mankind. "He had been all things," as he said of himself, "and all was of little value." *Omnia fuit et nihil expedit.* Distracted with the care, not of acquiring, but of preserving an empire, oppressed with age and infirmities, careless of fame, and satiated with empire, all his prospects of life were closed.—Gibbon, i. 130.

27. "Though I suffer," said Augustine when sick, "yet I am well, because I am as God would have me to be; for when we will not what he wills, it is we that are in the fault, and not he, who can neither do nor permit anything but what is just."—Letter xxxviii. edit. Benedict.

28. "It is incomparably better," says he in the same letter, "to shut the door of our heart against just anger, when it offers to come in, than to give it entrance; being uncertain, whether it may not grow too powerful for us to turn it out again."

29. "Non est episcopatus artificium transidgendæ vitæ fallacis.—Episcopacy ought not to be looked upon as an establishment, or a means to procure the deceitful pleasures of life."—Letter lviii.

30. Nectarius, an heathen, interceding with Augustine for some of his fellow-citizens, who had committed some crime, urges this reason to prevail with him: "That it is the duty of a bishop to do nothing but good to mankind: not to meddle with their affairs, unless it be to make them better, and to intercede with God to pardon their faults." Letter xc.

SERPENTS.

The effects of their poison are wonderful; as of that called the *Copper-head* in South America. A man stung by one became like a serpent: spots of various colors alternately appeared and vanished on different parts of his body: rage filled his *eyes*, which darted the most menacing looks on all present: he thrust out his *tongue* as the snakes do, and *hissed* through his teeth with inconceivable force.—A striking picture of our great adversary, and the manner in which by his suggestions he acts on the human mind, and fills it with his own temper and disposition. These effects from the bite of a serpent are not more extraordinary, than the foamings and barkings, and disposition to bite, which have been observed in cases of canine madness.—See Letters from an American Farmer, by J. Hector St. John, letter x. Crit. Rev. April, 1782, p. 267. See in the same place the account of a battle between two snakes, a black snake and a water snake, each six feet long, till they both fell into the ditch, where one kept the head of the other under water till he was suffocated.

SEVERITY PROFITABLE.

Children are the better for the severity of their parents; and the reproaches of an enemy serve often to correct and improve the person who is the object of them. The case, if we credit Erasmus, is pretty much the same in the republic of letters.—"Unius Laurentii Vallæ mordacitas non paulo plus conduxit rei literariæ, quam plurimorum ineptus candor, omnia omnium sine delectu mirantium, sibique invicem plaudentium, ac mutuum (quod aiunt) scabentium."—Epist. iii. 96.—The severity of Laurentius Valla did more service to the cause of letters, than the absurd indulgence of those, who, giving indiscriminate praise to the works of others, expect the same for their own, and, to use the words of the proverb, agree in scratching one another.

SHAKSPERE'S GENIUS.

Shakspere was perhaps in some instances less inventive than is commonly imagined. It appears from Dr. Farmer's pamphlet, that there was an astonishing mass of materials before him, in old translations of the classics, of Italian tales, romances, &c. Some of these are still extant; but many others, the names of which are preserved, have perished. From the former he is seen continually borrowing. The celebrated speech of Volumnia to her son is a piece of such remaining prose, only thrown into blank verse. In most cases, however, though the clay pre-existed, he was the Prometheus who animated it.

SHYNESS.

Mr. Loveday used to style shyness *the English madness*. If indulged it may be the cause of madness, by driving men to shun company and live in solitude, which few heads are strong enough to bear—none, if it be joined with idleness. Or it may be the *effect* of madness, which is misanthropic and malignant. Some say *pride* is always at the bottom. You do not like company, you are

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uneasy in it. Why? You are conscious of some infirmity which disqualifies you from shining, and making that figure you wish to do. Others excel you in breeding, conversation, and the arts of pleasing. You feel self-abasement and vexation at being thus abashed and kept under: you fly from the scene of torment, hating your tormentors, and abusing them either to yourself, or in society of an inferior sort, among those who will join you, having perhaps suffered the same, or worse; and so you relieve and comfort one another. —All this, I am afraid, is too true. An Englishman is upon the reserve, according to Mrs. Piozzi, by way of security, lest he should say something open to the censure and ridicule of others, and so his character should suffer. This is upon the same principle: and so, if he cannot say something fine and witty, and *worthy of himself*, he sits sullen, and says nothing. Thus a whole company among us is often silent for a considerable time together, till they wish themselves and one another *farther*. The Italians it seems, talk freely and easily all that occurs, having no such thoughts and fears. "A Frenchman," says Ganganelli, "is superficial and lively; an Englishman profound and gloomy."—Which is the best? In a social light, and as a companion, certainly the former.

SLAVERY.

He is a slave who cannot do that which he wishes to do, and which his sober reason and judgment dictate to be done. When this is to be the case, it is rather better that the tyrant should be *without* than *within*; for then he is always at hand to domineer; and he is harder to be vanquished and cast off.

SOBRIETY.

The residence of wisdom is said by one of the ancients to be in dry regions, not in bogs and fens. If the temperature of climate and soil have a great effect upon the mind, that of the body must needs have a far greater; and he, who, by drenching himself continually with liquor, puts his body into the state of Holland, may expect to have the genius of a Dutchman for his pains.

SOCIAL DUTY.

1. He who laments that he has not leisure to *pursue his studies*, when he is called upon to perform the duties of life, says Epictetus, is like a champion at the Olympic games, who, when he enters the lists, should fall a crying, because he is not exercising without.

2. A neglect of our duty to our friends and families, or to any person who may justly expect it from us, cannot be excused by allotting those hours to meditation, to prayer, to religious studies, which belong properly to society, and to the exercise of social virtues. Jortin's Sermons, iii. 238.

SOCINIANS.

They projected a league with the churches of Algiers and Morocco, in the time of Charles II. See their proposal to the ambassador, in the works of Leslie.—Adam Neuser, who was employed to introduce Socinianism into Germany, being disappointed, went into Turkey, and enlisted among the Janisaries. Mosheim, iv. 192, 8vo. where see an excellent account of the rise and progress of Socinianism and its principles. Socinus thought Christ was to be worshipped. (Stillingfleet, 149.) Some of his followers went farther, and denied that article: he tried to reclaim them, but in vain.—See Stillingfleet on the Trinity, preface, p. 59. At p. 62 there is a quotation from a Socinian writer, who styles the Tartar—"the shield and sword of that way of worshipping God." Paulus Alciatus is there mentioned, who from an Unitarian turned a Mahometan.

SUICIDE.

A scorpion, when he finds himself inclosed, and no way left him to escape, will bend his tail round, and sting himself through the head. And it is remarkable, that this is the only animal in the creation, man excepted, that can be made to commit *suicide*.

SUN.

If the sun were intelligent, he would see and know all, even to the intimate substance of things, as his rays penetrate to and affect every atom of matter. Thus is the Deity intimate to the spirits and thoughts of men. Cudworth adduces the instance of the sun, as furnishing an idea how all things may be viewed and governed by the Deity without pain, labor, or fatigue, in answer to the objection of the atheists against Providence (Bibl. Chois. ix. 64.): and a noble illustration it is as was ever conceived by man. A curious passage on the subject of God's omniscience is cited by Le Clerc, in the same place, from Xenophon's Mem. c. iv. 17 edit. Oxon. 8vo. God's glory consists in the communication of his goodness to his creatures, as the light diffused from the sun is the glory of the celestial luminary. Cudworth, B. C. ix. 69.

SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

The different sects may instruct each its

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own children in a school of its own; but I do not see how the children of different sects can be instructed together in one school, as their doctrines, catechisms, &c. are different, and the children are to be conducted to separate places of worship: the parents of one sort will not approve of their children being carried to the church or meeting-house of another. How can you bring them all up in a *catholic way*, unless you have one *catholic*, i. e. *universal, general, common* religion, in which to bring them up? To be of a *catholic spirit*, is to unite in that one religion; not to jumble together the errors, inconsistencies, and heresies of all. This must end in indifference. It may bring the people of the church nearer to the sects; but the present times do not give us any hope that it will bring the sects nearer to the church. —See Bruce, v. i. p. 519—523.

TARTARS—THEIR CUSTOMS.

1. In Kardan, a province of Tartary, as soon as a woman is delivered, she rises, washes, and dresses the child. Then the husband, getting into bed with the infant, keeps it there forty days, and receives visits *as if he* had lain in.—It seemeth not easy to account for this custom. Apply this to the case of authors who publish other people's works as their own, and take the credit to themselves; or to rectors, who value themselves on account of the good done by their curates.

2. Various have been the disputes, in different ages and nations, about the object of adoration. In some parts of Tartary, the inhabitants, to make short work of it, worship the oldest man in the house, as the being from whom the rest of the family have received life and all things.—Apply this to those who dote upon antiquity, as such.

TEA.

The Mogul Tartars, Abbé Grozier tells us, who feed on raw flesh, are subject to continual indigestions whenever they give over the use of tea.—It may be the same in some degree with all who eat so much animal food as we do. It is true, the work of digestion is made easier by fire, in dressing; but then our stomachs are weaker than those of the Tartars. Tea should not be drunk, but when there is something for it to feed upon.

TEMPERANCE.

1. Carnivorous animals have more courage, and muscular strength, and activity, in proportion to their bulk; which is evident by comparing the cat-kind, as lions, tigers, and likewise the dog-kind, with herb-eating animals of the same bulk. Birds of prey excel granivorous in strength and courage. I know more than one instance of irascible passions being much subdued by a vegetable diet.—Arbuthnot.

2. Imitation requires judgment to discern when circumstances are parallel; because, if they are not, it will be absurd and ridiculous; as a goose, that sees another goose drink, will do the same though he is not thirsty.—The custom of drinking for company, when drink is disagreeable and prejudicial, seems to be a case of the same kind, and to put a man (feathers only excepted) upon a footing with a goose.

3. The emperor of Abyssinia, at his meals, has always an officer present, whose business it is, as soon as he perceives in his imperial majesty any tendency to intemperance, to tell him of it; upon which he immediately rises from table, and retires.—See Dr. Poncet's Journey into Ethiopia, in the Jesuits' Travels by Lockman, vol. 1.

4. "You Europeans," say the Hottentots, "are madmen. You build great houses, though your bodies take up but little space: you have so great a number of wants, in order for clothing and nourishing yourselves, that, not contented with things sufficient for yourselves in Europe, you come to this and other countries, in order to dispossess the inhabitants of their clothes and food. With regard to ourselves, we want neither money nor wares: as we neither eat nor dress after your manner, there is nothing can oblige us to work and disturb ourselves as you do."

5. Hippocrates and Cornaro did so much honor to physic and temperance, as to insure their bodies from the attack of any disease; nor were they mistaken.

6. Porphyry's comparison is very just, that a full meal is like Sisera's banquet, at the end of which there is a nail struck into a man's temples. See Arnold on Ecclus. xxxi. 20.

7. A man who is determined, either by choice or necessity, to drink rum and water, should keep a jealous eye on his *measure*; that once violated, his palate becomes vitiated; and, if reason is not exerted to *prevent*, it will seldom be found equal to the task of *correcting* a habit formed upon the ruins of fortitude. Mosely on Tropical Diseases, p. 55.—An admirable observation, deserving well to be regarded by all who drink a mixture of *any spirits* with water—or even of *wine* and water.

TIME.

1. "No man," saith Lord Bacon, "can be

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so straitened and oppressed with business and an active course of life, but he may have many vacant times of leisure, while he expects the returns and tides of business." The question is, how these shall be filled up; with study and contemplation, or with sensuality and pleasure. A man may be out of his bed for sixteen of the twenty-four hours: what might not be done in that time?" See Rambler, 108, vol. iii. p. 14.

2. "Every day is a year to a silk-worm, and has in it the four seasons: the morning is spring, the middle of the day is summer, the evening autumn, and the night winter." Voyages and Travels, iv. 193, from Navarette. To man life is a year, and a year is a day. See the Idler.

3. Past scenes are generally recollected with a solemn sadness, caused by the thought, that the time is gone which will never more return. Our days must be well and profitably spent, if we would remember them with pleasure.

4. In our Christian course, it is but too generally and too truly observed, that, as we grow older, we grow colder; we become more slack, remiss, and weary in well-doing. The reverse ought to be the case, for the reason assigned by the apostle, when, stirring up his converts to vigor and zeal and alacrity, he says, "For now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." In a *race*, the *push* is made at *last*.

5. What enabled Dr. Birch to go through such a variety of undertakings was his being an early riser. By this method he had executed the business of the morning before numbers of people had begun it. And indeed it is the peculiar advantage of rising betimes, that it is not in the power of any interruptions, avocations, or engagements whatever, to deprive a man of the hours which have already been well employed, or to rob him of the consolation of reflecting, that he hath not spent the day in vain. Biog. Brit. ii. 323.

6. There is a traditional anecdote concerning Mr. Boyle, that he used sometimes to have it inscribed over his door—"Mr. Boyle is not to be spoken with to-day." This was very proper in one who was often engaged in processes of the utmost importance, and which required an unremitted attention. Indeed, if literary men, in general, could find a rational method of preventing the interruptions of needless morning visitants, it would be of service to the prosecution of many useful designs. Ibid. 514.

7. Cardan's motto was, "*Tempus mea possessio, tempus ager meus.*" "Time is my estate, my land that I am to cultivate." Lord, grant me ever to consider this, and so to cultivate it, that it may bring forth fruit to life eternal! *Amen.*

TRIUMPH BEFORE VICTORY.

Nothing can be got, but much may be lost, by triumphing before a battle. When Charles V. invaded France, he lost his generals and a great part of his army by famine and disease; and returned baffled and thoroughly mortified from an enterprise which he began with such confidence of its happy issue, that he desired Paul Jovius the historian to make a large provision of paper sufficient to record the victories he was going to acquire.

TYPES.

The Mosaic types are like triangular prisms, that must be set in a due light and posture, before they can represent that great variety of spiritual mysteries contained in them. The office of the prophets was to do this, and direct the people to see in these glasses the Son of God fully represented to their view. Still. Orig. Sac. b. ii. c. 5.

VAIN CURIOSITY.

Many people, instead of minding their own business, and securing their souls, amuse themselves with inquiring what will be the fate of Heathens, Jews, Turks, and other infidels, till they become little better than infidels themselves—"Lord, and what shall this man do?" "What is that to thee? Follow thou me."

UNIVERSITIES.

1. It was a custom with the Gymnosophists, every day, at dinner, to examine their disciples, how they had spent the morning; and every one was obliged to show, that he had discharged some good office, practised some virtue, or improved in some part of learning. If nothing of this appeared, he was sent back without his dinner. A mighty good institution, surely! Pity but it could be revived, and practiced in college-halls!

2. "For one lost by his own passions," says Maty, "I have known at least forty men ruined by *not being told of their danger.*" He proposes for reformation of universities—

1. Expulsion of those who will not submit to rules and orders and a state of pupilage.

2. A rigorous exaction of the stated appearances at chapel and in the hall.

3. To break, by varied hours of lecture, the possibility of long junketings.

4. Some feeling lectures from Plato and

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Epictetus on the dignity and manliness of the *boni vivere parvo;* the dependence and servility of debt; the *inelegance* and future mischiefs of promiscuous concubinage.

WIT.

1. He who sacrifices religion to wit, like the people mentioned by Ælian, worships a fly, and offers up an ox to it.

2. Wit, like salt, should excite an appetite, not provoke disgust; cleanse wounds, not create them; be used to recommend and preserve that which is sound, not to be thrown away upon that which is arleady rotten.

3. Wit without wisdom is salt without meat, and that is but a comfortless dish to set a hungry man down to. Wit, employed to disguise and prejudice truth, is salt thrown into a man's eyes.

4. Nothing is more absurd than to divert a man who wants to be comforted; for salt, though an excellent relisher, is a miserable cordial.

5. Jocularity should not be obtruded upon company when they are not in the humor for it; as a well bred man would no more force salt than pepper upon his guests, whose constitutions it might not suit.

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ON

THE USE

OF THE

HEBREW LANGUAGE,

IN A

LETTER TO THE HON. L. K.

By W. J.

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LETTER, &c.

NAYLAND, Oct. 29th, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

You will want little persuasion to the study of the Hebrew language, when you know how valuable it is in itself, and what help you will find from the use of it in your other studies: for it will be of service to you as a critic, a mythologist, an antiquarian, a philosopher, and a divine. If the Hebrew were the original language (which, however, is disputed, as all other things are,) the different languages of the world must partake of it more or less; and consequently they may be traced up to it. Unless a scholar is able to do this, he will be wanting in a very material part of his business: and, though I would not affront any man of learning, who is an able critic in Greek and Latin, as if he were a person of no knowledge, I am nevertheless very certain he would see much farther, and find great satisfaction, if the Hebrew were added to his other learning.

I must leave it to the compiler of the Lexicon to collect the various instances in which later languages may be traced up to this original: but I will give you a few examples, to show how easily it may be done, and to tempt you to find others for yourself at a future time.

The word *aurum*, gold, is Latin; which can be traced up to no Latin original; but in Hebrew the word אור *aur* expresses a kindred idea; it signifies *light*, to which *gold* is more nearly allied than any other substance, from its color and its splendor; and, in the symbolical language of the chemists, *gold* stands for the *sun*. When we have once obtained a leading idea in Hebrew, it is pleasant to see how other words in abundance will fall in with it: for hence we have the word *Aurora*, for the light of the morning; *Horus*, a name of the sun with the Egyptians; *Orion*, the the bright constellation, the brightest in the heavens; ωρα and ωραιος, beautiful; because the light is the most beautiful of all things; ουρανος, the heaven; and many others. So simple is the Hebrew, and so perfect in its construction, that even light itself is not an *original* sense; for אור is from אר, a biliteral root, which signifies *to flow;* light being in perpetual flux, and the most perfect of all fluids; perhaps the only *absolute* fluid in nature.

Nothing is more common than for large families of words to arrange themselves under some simple root in the Hebrew. Thus the words *fruit*, *fructus*, *fertilis*, *fero*, in Latin, φερω in Greek, *Freya* the northern goddess of fertility (whence our *Fryday*) all come from the Hebrew סרה FeRA, to *bear fruit*. Even in the English tongue, where you would little suspect it, the Hebrew word will account for the English. What is the word *sweat* but the זעת *zet* of the Hebrew? *Cypher* in English, is ספר SePheR in Hebrew: *dumb* in English, is דום *to be still: shiver* in English is in Hebrew שבר sheber or shever, to *break* in pieces: *hush*, be still, is from השה HaSHaH, to be silent: *track* is from the Hebrew דרך DRaCH *a way*, which in Arabic is *taracq: earth* is from ארץ AReTZ or EReTZ, a word of the same sense. *Is* in English, and εις in Greek, and *esse* and *est* in Latin, are all from the Hebrew יש *substance: shed* is from the Hebrew שר, to pour out. In Latin words, which have no affinity with any other word, the like agreement is frequently discovered with the Hebrew. The world *olim*, hereafter, or long ago, is not a word of a Latin form, but is the same with עלם olem *an age, ever*, &c. Thus in Greek the word χιτων, tunica, admits of no Greek derivation, but כתן CheTeN in Hebrew has the same sense.

In multitudes of Greek words, where the Lexicons force an etymology upon them, their deduction from the Hebrew is evident and natural. In their mythology nothing is more common than for the Greeks to use

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terms of which their own language knows nothing. Their religion was more ancient than themselves; and so has many names which their own language was not ancient enough to interpret: though they often attempt it in an absurd and ridiculous manner. What can we make of the word Σειρηνες, *Sirens*, first mentioned by Homer, as nymphs that enchant and destroy men with their *singing*? The lexicons derive it from σειρα a chain, which is nonsense; but go to the Hebrew, and you will find that שיר SYeR is *a song*, and will therefore very naturally give a name to *singers*.

Mulciber, one of the names of Vulcan, the god of fire (the same in character with the *Moloch* of the east,) which the Latins account for from *mulcendo ferrum*, because they will needs have it from their own language: but it is such Latin as never was used; and besides, *f* never changes into *b*, in the syllable *ber*, but the change is the contrary way. All is plain enough, if we go back to the original Vulcan, which is *Moloch*; for then the word *Mulciber* becomes מלך Melech אביר Abir, the Mighty King, which is Moloch. All the deities, which are many, whose names give them an alliance with Moloch, are from the Hebrew *Melech*, a king; such as *Adramelech*, *Anamelech*, *Milcom*, *Milicus*, &c. *Melicartus*, the Tyrian Hercules, is of no sense in Greek or Latin; but in the Hebrew it resolves itself into מלך ארץ *Melech Aretz*, king of the earth.

Saturnus, the god Saturn, and the *Satyri* of the woods, are names to which the Latin can give no interpretation: but if *Saturn*, according to his physical character, be taken for that secret *first matter* of nature, out of which all *forms* arise, and into which they are again resolved; and if *Satyrs* are considered as beings hiding themselves in woods and mountains; then they are all accounted for from the Hebrew סתר SaTaR, to hide: and even the discourse called a *Satire*, in which the meaning is always obscure and hidden, is best derived from the same word סתר SaTaR, to hide; as I remember I once mentioned to Dr. Johnson, and he affirmed the derivation to be right. Near of kin to this is the Egyptian *Isis*, the first matter of the world, from the Hebrew יש *substance*. This first matter is concealed under the *forms* or species of things, and never to be discovered as it is in itself; to signify which the image of Isis had a *veil* on.

They, who have no practice in the pursuit of etymologies, will hardly believe with what reason and certainty a derivation may be hunted down, which at first sight appears very wild and remote. אש, *ash*, or *esh*, in Hebrew signifies *burning fire* (whence our word *ashes*.) Now it seems rash to say that the Latin *Vesta* is from the Hebrew *Ash*; but it is plainly so: for from the original *Ash* is the dialectical Chaldee אשתא *Ashta*, whence the Greek Εστια, and thence (with the soft *F* prefixed, as in *vinum* from οινος) is the Latin *Vesta*.

In accounting for customs which we find in antiquity, we shall often be much at a loss, unless we are prepared to have recourse to the Hebrew. When you read in Xenophon, that the *war-shout* or signal for battle was ελελευ, this word being not Greek, you may take it for an unmeaning, barbarous outcry, like the *war-whoop* among the American Indians: but it is no other than the ancient Hebrew acclamation *Hallelu*, so often repeated in songs of praise. It is also written αλαλευ; and was probably the customary acclamation for mutual encouragement in the wars of the Hebrews with the Heathen nations of Canaan; from whom the later Heathens took it.

The *Phœnicians* spoke very nearly the same language with the Hebrews; and Virgil acted with judgment in giving Phœnician names to Phœnician people in his poem. The name *Dido* is the *beloved one*, from the same root with דוד DUD or *David*; her other name, *Eliza*, is one of the Hebrew names of the New Testament; and her sister *Anna* is the Hebrew *Hannah* of the Scripture. In Sallust, &c. the famous name of *Hamibal* is Hebrew, and signifies *Gracious Lord*, or *my gracious Lord*: *Hiempsal* is ימשל Imeshal, *He shall reign*, or *be a ruler*; and there are other like names which can be interpreted only in the same way. In one of the plays of Plautus (the *Pœnulus*) a Carthaginian is brought upon the stage, as we should bring a Frenchman to laugh at his broken English. The language he is there made to speak was taken for unmeaning gibberish; till *Bochart* was able, by a most happy stroke of criticism, to interpret it throughout, from the affinity of the Carthaginian to the Hebrew. As the antiquity which is most remote brings us nearer to the time when all men spoke some dialect of the Hebrew, it is impossible to interpret the ancient names of persons and people, but from a familiarity with the Hebrew. The Greeks derived themselves from a most ancient ancestor by the name of *Japetus*: and who can he be, but their real ancestor *Japhet*? Their *letters* were derived to them from the East; and the tradition is preserved under the fabulous person of *Cadmus*: which is from קדום Cadom, the *East* or *a man of the East*. Every body knows there was such a city as Babylon; but the Hebrew reader only knows it had its original from the

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word *Babel*, which being interpreted means *in confusion*, because language was there first confounded: and, to this day, a man that talks unintelligibly or nonsensically, is said in English to *babble*.

In divinity it often happens, in particular cases, that you cannot so well judge what is right or what is wrong, nor detect the perverse glosses of wanton or evil minded critics, unless you are well enough acquainted with the Hebrew to use some critical judgment in it: of which Mr. Parkhurst's pamphlet against Priestley is a remarkable instance, and opens a mine of evidence, which that juggler knows not what to make of. We live in an age fond of novelty; when literary adventurers are rather too free and bold in their experiments upon the sacred text. Dr. Kennicott promised great things, and raised the expectations of the public. His pretensions were examined and disputed by some persons who were learned in the Hebrew; and we narrowly escaped the danger of a new text and new version. On any future occasion of the same kind, the like danger may not be escaped, if the Hebrew language and its scholastic history should be neglected.

When we consult Mr. Parkhurst's Hebrew Lexicon, it is pleasant to see how many passages of Scripture are illustrated, how many difficulties cleared up by the author; and whoever follows his example, will soon discover how much his prospects are enlarged, when he studies the Bible in the original. He that should read the New Testament in the Greek, and be under the necessity of taking all his knowledge of it from the Latin of the Vulgate, would be thought very deficient in his learning: and the case is parallel, if, in the interpretation of the Old Testament, we are unable to compare the Greek version of the Septuagint with the original Hebrew; which it is often necessary to do. Many discoveries arise, if this comparison is faithfully made: among other things it appears, from the different manner in which the Greek translators have pronounced many proper names, that they did not translate from a copy with the present vowel points,* such as are used by the Jews; against whom we are to provide ourselves with weapons, as against the most dangerous enemies of the Gospel: and who but a *Hebrew Christian* can be a match for them in their own way? In the New Testament there is a sort of Greek, which cannot be reconciled with ordinary Greek authors: because there is a frequent use of such forms of language (we call them *idioms*) as are transferred to the Greek from the Hebrew of the Old Testament, and which cannot otherwise be accounted for.

But now, lastly, I recommend the Hebrew chiefly on this consideration: because the language is *in itself* instructive; its words give us light into *things*, in a manner different from those of any other language in the world: and this, beyond all other arguments, convinces me of its divine original. I will give you some examples:—The word *clothe*, in Latin *vestio*, in Greek ενδυω, gives us no instruction; but the Hebrew לבש LeBeSH *to clothe*, comprehends the idea of בש *BeSH shame*, (whence the English *bashful* and *abash*,) and, with the ל prefixed, it is *for*, or on account of *shame*: so the *term* not only stands for the *thing*, as in other languages, but gives us the *reason* of the thing; it refers us to the *moral* history and origin of clothing; and all this in three letters.

The English word *hail*, in Latin *grando*, in Greek χαλαζα, gives us no information about the nature of the thing: but, if we take the word ברד BeReD in Hebrew, as we took LeBeSH, it resolves itself into ב—רד, which signifies *in descensu*, and so describes to us the physiological formation of hail; which, as philosophers agree, is first formed into drops of rain, and, *as it falls*, is frozen into hail.*

In roots of the Hebrew language, which consist mostly of two letters, some idea is taken from nature; and the word, with some new modification, is carried on, and applied to other objects: and, if there were no other argument, this alone would convince me that the Hebrew, from the simple fabrication of its terms, is not only the first of languages, but of a construction beyond the invention of human wisdom. Thus, for example, the word צלם Tzelem signifies an *image*: but why so? because צל Tzel is a *shadow*, the first of images, such as nature itself makes: the light of the sun forms it naturally, and

* The *Hexapla* of Origen is a work to which I have at present no access; but I set down what I suppose to be a faithful account of it. He gives the Hebrew text in Greek letters: wherein he "uniformly expresses what the Masorites call the quiescent letters, the *Aleph*, *He*, *Vau*, and *Jod*, by *Vowels*; but so variously, that it is clear he considered it to be a matter of indifference by what vowel he should denote them. He always treats the *Ain* and *Heth* as vowels: and, when two consonants occur, he seems to have considered it optional what vowel he should admit between them. All this is diametrically opposite to the system of the Masorites." Horæ Biblicæ, p. 77.

* When a gentleman very learned in the Hebrew saw this account of ברד, he observed upon it that ביץ an egg was such another word compounded of ב and יצא; for it is remarkable in the physiology of the egg, that the shell acquires its hardness *in exitu*, as it comes forth.

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presents it to the sight of man. In many words, two ideas are comprehended, because they are found together in nature. It is impossible for us, in many cases, from our imperfect knowledge of things, to account for and reconcile the kindred senses of Hebrew words; but in many the reason of them is too plain to be contradicted. The word ראש RASH signifies the *head*, and it signifies *poison:* and the relation appears in nature, which has placed the most deadly of *poisons* in the *head* of the serpent: a creature of great signification in Hebrew doctrine. I do not see that this reason is assigned by the learned Mr. Parkhurst; but I find it in *Marius—Sunt qui dicunt sic appellari, eo quod venenum sit in capite aspidis.*

The same word which signifies the *hoar-frost*, signifies to *cover;* because the hoar-frost is a sudden and universal covering spread over the face of the ground. The word also signifies an *atonement;* by which, as it appears from several passages of the Scripture, either the face of the person offended is understood to be covered, so that he no longer looks upon the offence; or the sin itself is so covered that it can no longer be seen, and even assumes a new appearance from the nature and quality of the covering; just as the face of the earth becomes white and pure when the hoar-frost is upon it: which conveys a very beautiful and pleasant idea of atonement and propitiation. All this is expressed by the word כפר CaPHaR; whence is plainly derived our English word *cover*. This term admits of an accident, which may seem to contradict our system of *kindred ideas*, but does really confirm it. The word which signifies hoar-frost does also signify *pitch;* the one as white as snow, the other as black as a coal: but the leading idea of *covering* is still preserved, for pitch is the most effectual covering in the world to keep out water and weather. In Gen. vi. 14. it is applied to the covering of Noah's ark; and the reader will find that the *pitch* and the *covering* are both expressed by the same word.

גל GaL is a root which, as a verb, signifies to *roll round*, or circulate; and, as a noun, any *round thing*. Hence it signifies to *dance;* because the motions of the dance were circular, to imitate the motions of the heavenly bodies. It signifies also to be *glad;* because gladness is that way expressed. And likewise a *wheel*, from its form and its *revolution;* and particularly the watering wheel of the East, which yields its water by a circulation: Solomon is supposed to have used this term in that famous allegory of Eccles. xii. with an allusion to the circulation of the blood in the human body, which ceases in death: the passage is well worth considering. Hence also we have a name for the human *skull*,* from the roundness of its figure; and also for the *thistle down*, or winged seed, because it is a light round body, and has a rotation as it rolls along before the wind. And I may add, what is as curious as anything, that the root in question gives us the word גלם GeLeM, which signifies the human fœtus or embryo; and with philosophical propriety, because in that the body is rolled up or folded together. From *Gelem* comes the word *glomus* a ball of thread, and *glomero* to wind about or gather together.

How simple is the construction of that language which, beginning with the preposition על OL, *upon* or *over*, adds another letter, and turns it into a verb, עלה *OLaH*, to ascend; which, becoming a noun, signifies a *burnt offering;* teaching us to consider it as an *ascension*, because the smoke and flame of it goes up towards heaven, which cannot happen unless it is consumed by fire; on which much might be said! The barbarous people of Madagascar have a sacrifice which they call an *Owley;* retaining the very word of the Mosaic law. From the same root we have a word for the *wild goat* of the mountains, from its climbing upwards; also for the *leaf of a tree*, from its superior situation; whence, with the *f*, or digamma prefixed, we have the Latin *folium*. It furnishes us also with a word for *stairs*, because people ascend by them; and for a *lord* or ruler, because he is *over* others: in alliance with which we have one of the names of God, עליון *Olion*, because he is *over all;* and it is rendered by the word *Altissimus* in Latin, in English the *Most High*.

Compare this set of words with one another in Latin, and you will find neither root, branch, nor relation among them. *Super* has no alliance with *scando;* nor *scando* with *gradus;* nor *gradus* with *folium;* nor *folium* with *altus;* nor *altus* with *rupicapra*: every word, when compared with the rest, is an unrelated individual; and the case would be found the same in the Greek, or any other language of more modern use and invention: so that when I view the Hebrew language, such as I have now represented it to you (in too small a compass for the greatness of the subject), I am persuaded it must either have been originally given to man by his Creator, or framed by men the powers of whose minds were very different from our own.

* Hence the word *Golgotha*, in the New Testament.

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But give me leave to forewarn you, that caution is to be used, and great experience is requisite, in order to handle the Hebrew with safety; otherwise you may chance to make that ridiculous which you intend to magnify. For want of knowing better, we may give *the lead* to a *wrong idea;* that which is not the radical one: and then we shall be forced upon strange and unnatural alliances; and, from our imperfect insight into many things, we may not be able to discover that there is any leading idea at all. It is natural to follow with too much assurance the alluring pursuits of *etymology;* and, if we are found to do it without temperance or discretion, we shall find no mercy from those who are not well affected to the originalities of learning and religion; who may therefore treat us with a smile, meaning it for the smile of superior wisdom: but folly and ignorance are more given to smile than wisdom and science.

I have said enough to convince you, that the study of Hebrew, if you use it properly, will abundantly repay your labor; that it is even necessary and essential, if you would be, what I may call (to speak after the Hebrew style) a *radical* scholar, and see into the originals of things both sacred and profane: that it is related to itself by associations and images, not merely curious, but often very beautiful and instructive: in short, that it communicates knowledge of the best kind under a singular form, no where else to be met with. I could have multiplied my examples in abundance; for there was a time of my life when I sat for half a year together to compare the Hebrew language with itself in every word of it (so far as it is retained and preserved) and I have loved and admired it ever since. You will do the same, if you take half as much pains as I did; and, for your encouragement, you will have an advantage which I had not, later years having produced that excellent work the Lexicon, Hebrew and English, of Mr. Parkhurst; who has made it a magazine of general learning, antiquity, divinity, and natural history; and has illustrated his Hebrew literature from the Greek and Roman classics, and from useful authors, ancient and modern, of every denomination.

In the modern Hebrew learning, you have another advantage, and a great one it is; that you are taken out of the hands of the *Jews;* who begin their teaching with the egregious absurdity of an alphabet without vowels, to make way for their Hebrew points, which are a modern invention, and overburthen you with an insupportable multiplicity of rules. Their notions of the Hebrew are much of a size with their sense of divinity. That noble instrument of wisdom, in their hands, is like an instrument of astronomy in the hands of a child, or like a telescope with the blind. Trust yourself to Mr. Parkhurst, a good *Christian*, and he will take you by the hand at the first step, and carry you as far as you will wish to go in CHRISTIAN HEBREW. That your success may be such as I augurate from a foreknowledge of your capacity and application, is the sincere wish of,

Dear Sir,

Your affectionate friend,
and obedient, humble servant,
W. JONES.

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DR. HORNE

ON

THE PSALMS.

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PREFACE.

THE Psalms are an epitome of the Bible, adapted to the purposes of devotion. They treat occasionally of the creation and formation of the world; the dispensations of Providence, and the economy of grace; the transactions of the patriarchs; the exodus of the children of Israel; their journey through the wilderness, and settlement in Canaan; their law, priesthood, and ritual; the exploits of their great men, wrought through faith; their sins and captivities; their repentances and restorations; the sufferings and victories of David; the peaceful and happy reign of Solomon; the advent of Messiah, with its effects and consequences; his incarnation, birth, life, passion, death, resurrection, ascension, kingdom, and priesthood; the effusion of the Spirit; the conversion of the nations; the rejection of the Jews; the establishment, increase, and perpetuity of the Christian church; the end of the world; the general judgment; the condemnation of the wicked; and the final triumph of the righteous with their Lord and King. These are the subjects here presented to our meditations. We are instructed how to conceive of them aright, and to express the different affections which, when so conceived of, they must excite in our minds. They are, for this purpose, adorned with the figures, and set off with all the graces of poetry; and poetry itself is designed yet farther to be recommended by the charms of music, thus consecrated to the service of God; that so delight may prepare the way for improvement, and pleasure become the handmaid of wisdom, while every turbulent passion is calmed by sacred melody, and the evil spirit is still dispossessed by the harp of the son of Jesse. This little volume, like the paradise of Eden, affords us in perfection, though in miniature, every thing that groweth elsewhere, "every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food;" and above all, what was there lost, but is here restored, THE TREE OF LIFE IN THE MIDST OF THE GARDEN. That which we read, as matter of speculation, in the other Scriptures, is reduced to practice, when we recite it in the Psalms; in those, repentance and faith are described, but in these, they are acted: by a perusal of the former, we learn how others served God, but, by using the latter, we serve him ourselves. "What is there necessary for man to know," says the pious and judicious Hooker, "which the Psalms are not able to teach? They are to beginners an easy and familiar introduction, a mighty augmentation of all virtue and knowledge in such as are entered before, a strong confirmation to the most perfect among others. Heroical magnanimity, exquisite justice, grave moderation, exact wisdom, repentance unfeigned, unwearied patience, the mysteries of God, the sufferings of Christ, the terrors of wrath, the comforts of grace, the works of Providence over this world, and the promised joys of that world which is to come; all good necessarily to be either known or done or had, this one celestial fountain yieldeth. Let there be any grief or disease incident unto the soul of man, any wound or sickness named, for which there is not, in this treasure-house, a present comfortable remedy at all times ready to be found."* In the language of this divine book, therefore, the prayers and praises of the church have been offered up to the throne of grace, from age to age. And it appears to have been the manual of the Son of God, in the days of his flesh; who, at the conclusion of his last supper, is generally supposed, and that upon good grounds, to have sung an hymn taken from it;† who pronounced, on the cross, the beginning of the xxiid Psalm; "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and

* Hooker's Ecclesiast. Pol. b. v. sect. 37.

† St. Matthew informs us, chap. xxvi. 30, that he and his apostles "sung an hymn;" and the hymn usually sung by the Jews, upon that occasion, was, what they called, the "great Hallel," consisting of the Psalms from the cxiiith to the cxviiith inclusive.

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expired with a part of the xxxist Psalm in his mouth; "Into thy hands I commend my spirit." Thus He, who had not the Spirit by measure, in whom were hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and who spake as never man spake, yet chose to conclude his life, to solace himself in his greatest agony, and at last to breathe out his soul, in the Psalmist's form of words rather than his own. No tongue of man or angel, as Dr. Hammond justly observes, can convey an higher idea of any book, and of their felicity who use it aright.

Proportionable to the excellency of the Psalms, hath been the number of their expositors. The ancients were chiefly taken up in making spiritual or evangelical applications of them; in adapting their discourses on them to the general exigencies of the Christian church, or to the particular necessities of the age in which they wrote. The moderns have set themselves to investigate with diligence, and ascertain with accuracy, their literal scope and meaning. Piety and devotion characterize the writings of the ancients; the commentaries of the moderns display more learning and judgment. The ancients have taught us how to rear a goodly superstructure; but the moderns have laid the surest foundation. To bring them in some measure together, is the design of the following work; in which the author has not labored to point out what seemed wrong in either, but to extract what he judged to be right from both; to make the annotations of the latter a groundwork for improvements like those of the former; and thus to construct an edifice, solid, as well as spacious. Materials, and good ones, he cannot be said to have wanted; so that if the building should give way, the cement must have been faulty, or the workman unskilful.

The right of the Psalter to a place in the sacred canon hath never been disputed; and it is often cited by our Lord and his apostles in the New Testament, as the work of the Holy Spirit. Whether David therefore, or any other prophet, was employed as the instrument of communicating to the church such or such a particular Psalm, is a question which, if it cannot always be satisfactorily answered, needs not disquiet our minds. When we discern, in an epistle, the well known hand of a friend, we are not solicitous about the pen with which it was written.

The number of Psalms is the same in the original, and in the version of the LXX.; only these last have, by some mistake, thrown the ninth and tenth into one, as also the hundred and fourteenth, and the hundred and fifteenth, and have divided the hundred and sixteenth into two, as also the hundred and forty-seventh. The Hebrews have distributed them into five books; but for what reason, or upon what authority, we know not. This is certain, that the apostles quote from "the book of Psalms,"* and that they quote the "second Psalm" of that book, in the order in which it now stands.† That division, which our own church hath made of them, into thirty portions, assigning one to each day of the month, it hath been thought expedient to set down in the margin; as persons may often choose to turn to the commentary on those Psalms, which occur in their daily course of reading.

In the titles, prefixed to some of the Psalms, there is so much obscurity, and in the conjectures which have been made concerning them, both in a literal and spiritual way, so great a variety and uncertainty, that the author, finding himself, after all his searches, unable to offer anything which he thought could content the learned, or edify the unlearned, at length determined to omit them; as the sight of them, unexplained, only distracts the eye and attention of the reader. The omission of the word SELAH must be apologized for in the same manner. The information obtained from the historical titles will be found in the Argument placed at the head of each Psalm; though even that is not always to be relied on.

Where this information failed, the occasion and drift of a Psalm were to be collected from the internal evidence contained in itself, by a diligent perusal of it, with a view to the sacred history; the light of which, when held to the Psalms, often dissipates the darkness that must otherwise for ever envelop allusions to particular events and circumstances. Sometimes, indeed, the descriptions are couched in terms more general; and then, the want of such information is less perceived. If it appear, for instance, that David, at the time of composing any Psalm, was under persecution, or had been lately delivered from it, it may not be of any great consequence, if we cannot determine with precision, whether his persecution by Saul and Doeg, or that by Absalom and Ahithophel, be intended and referred to. The expressions either of his sorrow or his joy, his strains, whether plaintive or jubilant, may be nearly the same, in both cases, respectively. This observation may be extended to many other instances of calamities bewailed, or deliverances celebrated in the Psalms, sometimes by the prince, sometimes by the community, and frequently by both together.

* Acts, i. 20. † Acts, xiii. 33.

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Upon the whole, it is hoped, that the design of each Psalm hath been sufficiently discovered, to explain and apply it, for the instruction and comfort of believers.

The result of such critical inquiries as were found necessary to be made, is given in as few words as possible; often only by inserting into a verse, or subjoining to it, that sense of a word, or phrase, which seemed upon mature deliberation to be the best; as it was deemed improper to clog, with prolix disquisitions of this kind, a work intended for general use. The reader will, however, reap the benefit of many such, which have been carefully consulted for him. And he will not, it is presumed, have reason to complain, that any verse is passed over without a tolerable consistent interpretation, and some useful improvement.—Where the literal sense was plain, it is noticed only so far as was necessary to make an application, or form a reflection. Where there appeared any obscurity or difficulty, recourse was had to the best critics, and that solution, which seemed the most satisfactory, given in the concisest manner. Much labor hath here been bestowed, where little appears. The plan of every Psalm hath been attentively studied, with the connection and dependence of its parts, which it is the design of the Argument to exhibit at one view, and of the Commentary to pursue and explain from beginning to end.*

No person is more thoroughly sensible than the author is, of the respect and gratitude due from all lovers of the sacred writings, to those who have labored in the field of literal criticism; great and illustrious characters, whose names will be had by the church in everlasting remembrance! All who desire to understand the Scriptures, must enter into their labors, and make the proper advantage of them, as he himself hath endeavored to do. But let us also bear in mind, that all is not done, when this is done. A work of the utmost importance still remains, which it is the business of Theology† to undertake and execute; since, with respect to the Old Testament, and the Psalter more especially, a person may attain a critical and grammatical knowledge of them, and yet continue a Jew, with a veil upon his heart; an utter stranger to that sense of the holy books, evidently intended, in such a variety of instances, to bear testimony to the Saviour of the world; that sense, which is styled, by divines, the PROPHETICAL, EVANGELICAL, MYSTICAL, OR SPIRITUAL sense. As it is one great design of the following work to investigate that sense in many of the Psalms, this is the proper place to lay before the reader those grounds and reasons upon which such investigation has been made.

That the spiritual interpretation of the Scripture, like all other good things, is liable to abuse, and that it hath been actually abused, both in ancient and modern days, cannot be denied. He who shall go about to apply, in this way, any passage, before he hath attained its literal meaning, may say what in itself is pious and true, but foreign to the text from which he endeavoreth to deduce it. St. Jerome, it is well known, when grown older and wiser, lamented, that, in the fervors of a youthful fancy, he had spiritualized the prophecy of Obadiah, before he understood it. And it must be allowed that a due attention to the occasion and scope of the Psalms, would have pared off many unseemly excrescences, which now deform the commentaries of St. Augustin, and other Fathers, upon them. But these, and other concessions of the same kind being made, as they are made very freely, "men of sense will consider, that a principle is not therefore to be rejected, because it has been abused;"** since human errors can never invalidate the truths of God.

It may not be amiss, therefore, to run through the Psalter, and point out some of the more remarkable passages, which are cited from thence by our Lord and his apostles, and applied to matters evangelical.

No sooner have we opened the book, than the second Psalm presenteth itself, to all appearance, as an inauguration hymn, composed by David, the anointed of Jehovah, when by him crowned with victory, and placed triumphant on the sacred hill of Sion. But let us turn to Acts, iv. 25, and there we find the apostles, with one voice, declaring the Psalm to be descriptive of the exaltation of Jesus Christ, and of the opposition raised against his Gospel, both by Jew and Gentile.

In the eighth Psalm we imagine the writer to be setting forth the pre-eminence of man in general, above the rest of the creation; but by Heb. ii. 6, we are informed, that the supremacy conferred on the second Adam, the man Christ Jesus, over all things in heaven and earth, is the subject there treated of.

St. Peter stands up, Acts, ii. 25, and

* Nos Lectoris pium hunc laborem adjuvandum suscepimus: dum constitutis argumentis scopum attentioni figimus: dum scrutarum literam, et ex sacrâ historiâ, quantum possumus, omnia repetimus; dum annotamus quæ pietatem inflamment; alia eo exemplo quærendâ indicamus. BOSSUET. Dissertat. in Psal. cap. vii.

† Theologiæ insignis hic usus est, ut, verborum sensu exposito, REM intelligas. ELSNER. Præfat. ad Observat. Sacr.

* Bishop HURD's Introduction to the Study of the Prophecies, p. 64.

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preaches the resurrection of Jesus from the latter part of the sixteenth Psalm; and, lo! three thousand souls are converted by the sermon.

Of the eighteenth Psalm we are told, in the course of the sacred history, 2 Sam. xxii. that "David spake before the Lord the words of that song, in the day that the Lord delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul." Yet in Rom. xv. 9, the 49th verse of that Psalm is adduced as a proof, that "the Gentiles should glorify God for his mercy in Jesus Christ, as it is written, For this cause will I confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name."

In the nineteenth Psalm, David seems to be speaking of the material heavens, and their operations only, when he says, "their sound is gone out into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." But St. Paul, Rom. x. 18, quotes the passage to show, that the Gospel had been universally published by the apostles.

The twenty-second Psalm Christ appropriated to himself, by beginning it in the midst of his sufferings on the cross; "My God, my God," &c. Three other verses of it are, in the New Testament, applied to him; and the words of the 8th verse were actually used by the chief priests, when they reviled him; "He trusted in God," &c. Matt. xxvii. 43.

When David saith, in the fortieth Psalm, "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire—Lo, I come to do thy will:" we might suppose him only to declare in his own person, that obedience is better than sacrifice. But from Heb. x. 5, we learn, that Messiah, in that place, speaketh of his advent in the flesh, to abolish the legal sacrifices, and to do away sin, by the oblation of himself, once for all.

That tender and pathetic complaint, in the forty-first Psalm, "Mine own familiar friend in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lift up his heel against me," undoubtedly might be, and probably was, originally uttered by David, upon the revolt of his old friend and counsellor, Ahithophel, to the party of his rebellious son, Absalom. But we are certain, from John, xiii. 18, that this Scripture was fulfilled, when Christ was betrayed by his apostate disciple—"I speak not of you all; I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scriptures may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lift up his heel against me."

The forty-fourth Psalm we must suppose to have been written on occasion of a persecution under which the church at that time labored; but a verse of it is cited, Rom. viii. 36, as expressive of what Christians were to suffer, on their blessed Master's account; "as it is written, For thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep appointed to be slain."

A quotation from the forty-fifth Psalm, in Heb. i. 8, certifies us, that the whole is addressed to the Son of God, and therefore celebrates his spiritual union with the church, and the happy fruits of it.

The sixty-eighth Psalm, though apparently conversant about Israelitish victories, the translation of the ark to Sion, and the services of the tabernacle, yet does, under those figures, treat of Christ's resurrection, his going up on high, leading captivity captive, pouring out the gifts of the Spirit, erecting his church in the world, and enlarging it by the accession of the nations to the faith; as will be evident to any one, who considers the force and consequence of the apostle's citation from it, Ephes. iv. 7, 8. "Unto every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men."

The sixty-ninth Psalm is five times referred to in the Gospels, as being uttered by the prophet, in the person of Messiah. The imprecations, or rather predictions, at the latter end of it, are applied, Rom. xi. 9, 10, to the Jews; and to Judas, Acts, i. 20, where the hundred and ninth Psalm is also cited, as prophetical of the sore judgments which should befall that arch traitor, and the wretched nation of which he was an epitome.

St. Matthew, informing us, chap. xiii. 34, that Jesus spake to the multitude in parables, gives it as one reason why he did so, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, Psal. lxxviii. 2, "I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world."

The ninety-first Psalm was applied, by the tempter, to Messiah: nor did our Lord object to the application, but only to the false inference, which his adversary suggested from it. Matt. iv. 6, 7.

The ninety-fifth Psalm is explained at large in Heb. iii. and iv. as relative to the state and trial of Christians in the world, and to their attainment of the heavenly rest.

The hundred and tenth Psalm, is cited by Christ himself, Matt. xxii. 44, as treating of his exaltation, kingdom, and priesthood.

The hundred and seventeenth Psalm, consisting only of two verses, is employed, Rom. xv. 11, to prove, that the Gentiles were one day to praise God for the mercies of redemption.

The 22d verse of the hundred and eighteenth Psalm, "The stone which the builders

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refused," &c. is quoted six different times, as spoken of our Saviour.

And, lastly, "the fruit of David's body," which God is said, in the hundred and thirty-second Psalm, to have promised that he would place upon his "throne," is asserted, Acts, ii. 30, to be Jesus Christ.

These citations, lying dispersed through the Scriptures of the New Testament, are often suffered by common readers to pass unnoticed. And many others content themselves with saying, that they are made in a sense of accommodation, as passages may be quoted from poems or histories merely human, for the illustration of truths, of which their authors never thought. "And this," as a learned critic observes, "is no fault, but rather a beauty in writing. A passage applied justly, and in a new sense, is ever pleasing to an ingenious reader, who loves to be agreeably surprised, and to see a likeness and pertinency where he expected none. He has that surprise, which the Latin poet so poetically gives to the tree:

'Miraturque novas frondes, et non sua poma.'"

The readers, who have been accustomed to consider the New Testament citations in this view of accommodation only, must perceive the necessity of such accommodation, at least, to adapt the use of the Psalms, as a part of divine service, to the times and circumstances of the Gospel; and cannot therefore reasonably object, upon their own principles, to the applications made in the following sheets for that purpose. But not to inquire, at present, whether passages are not sometimes cited in this manner, surely no one can attentively review the above made collection of New Testament citations from the book of Psalms, as they have been placed together before him, without perceiving that the Psalms are written upon a divine, preconcerted, prophetical plan, and contain much more than, at first sight, they appear to do. They are beautiful without, but all-glorious within, like "apples of gold in pictures, or net-work cases of silver;" Prov. xxv. 11. The brightness of the casket attracts our attention, till, through it, upon a nearer approach, we discover its contents. And then, indeed, it may be said to have "no glory, by reason of the glory that so far excelleth."* Very delightful and profitable they are, in their literal and historical sense, which well repayeth all the pains taken to come at it. But that once obtained a farther scene begins to open upon us, and all the blessings of the Gospel present themselves to the eye of faith. So that the expositor is as a traveller ascending an eminence, neither unfruitful, nor unpleasant; at the top of which when he is arrived, he beholds, like Moses from the summit of Mount Nebo, a more lovely and extensive prospect lying beyond it and stretching away to the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills. He sees valleys covered over with corn, blooming gardens and verdant meadows, with flocks and herds feeding by rivers of water; till, ravished with the sight, he cries out, as Peter did at the view of his Master's glory, "It is good to be here!"

It would be unreasonable to suppose, that no parts of the Psalms may by us be spiritually applied, but such as are already expressly applied for us by the inspired writers. Let any man consider attentively a New Testament citation; then let him as carefully read over, with a view to it, the Psalm from which it is taken, and see if it will not serve him as a key, wherewith to unlock the treasures of eternal wisdom; if it will not "open his eyes," and show him "wonderful things" in God's law. When we are taught to consider one verse of a Psalm as spoken by Messiah, and there is no change of person, what can we conclude, but that he is the speaker through the whole? In that case, the Psalm becomes at once as much transfigured, as the blessed Person, supposed to be the subject of it, was on Mount Tabor. And if Messiah be the speaker of one Psalm, what should hinder, but that another Psalm, where the same kind of scene is evidently described, and the same expressions are used, may be expounded in the same manner?

It is very justly observed by Dr. Allix, that "although the sense of near fifty Psalms be fixed and settled by divine authors, yet Christ and his apostles did not undertake to quote all the Psalms they could quote, but only to give a key to their hearers, by which they might apply to the same subjects the Psalms of the same composure and expression."* The citations of the New Testament were made incidentally, and as occasion was given. But can we imagine that the church was not farther instructed in the manner of of applying the Psalms to her Redeemer and to herself? Did she stop at the applications thus incidentally and occasionally made by the inspired writers? Did she stop, because they had directed her how to proceed? We know she did not. The primitive fathers, it is true, for want of critical learning, and particularly a competent knowledge of the original Hebrew, often wandered

* 2 Cor. iii. 10.

* Preface to his book of Psalms, p. 9.

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in their expositions; but they are unexceptionable witnesses to us of this matter of fact, that such a method of expounding the Psalms, built upon the practice of the apostles in their writings and preachings, did universally prevail in the church from the beginning. They, who have ever looked into St. Augustin, know, that he pursues this plan invariably, treating of the Psalms as proceeding from the mouth of Christ, or of the church, or of both, considered as one mystical person. The same is true of Jerome, Ambrose, Arnobius, Cassiodore, Hilary, and Prosper. Chrysostom studies to make the Psalter useful to believers under the Gospel. Theodoret attends both to the literal and prophetical sense. But what is very observable, Tertullian, who flourished at the beginning of the third century, mentions it, as if it were then an allowed point in the church, that "almost all the Psalms are spoken in the person of Christ, being addressed by the Son to the Father, that is, by Christ to God."* In this channel flows the stream of the earliest Christian expositors. Nor did they depart, in this point, from the doctrine held in the church of the ancient Jews, who were always taught to regard MESSIAH as the capital object of the Psalter. And though, when the time came, that people would not receive Jesus of Nazareth as their Messiah, it does not appear that they ever objected to the propriety of the citations made by our Lord and his apostles, or thought such passages applicable to David only and his concerns. Nay, the most learned of their Rabbies, who have written since the commencement of the Christian era, still agree with us in referring many of the Psalms to Messiah and his kingdom; differing only about the person of the one, and the nature of the other.

When learning arose, as it were, from the dead, in the sixteenth century, and the study of primitive theology by that means revived, the spiritual interpretation of the Scriptures revived with it. It was adopted at that time, by one admirably qualified to do it justice, and to recommend it again to the world by every charm of genius, and every ornament of language. I mean the accomplished Erasmus, who omitteth no opportunity of insisting on the usefulness and even the necessity of it, for the right understanding of the Scriptures; for the attainment of that wisdom which they teach, and that holiness which they prescribe; seeming to think himself never better employed, than when he is removing the earth and rubbish with which those Philistines, the monks, had stopped up the wells of salvation, opened by the apostles and first fathers of the church, for the benefit of mankind.* This great man was much importuned by his learned friends, as he informeth us in an epistle to Cardinal Sadolet, to write a commentary on the Psalms.† Such a work, executed by him, had been one of the richest gifts that were ever cast into the Christian treasury; as we may judge from the specimen which he hath left us, in his discourses on eleven of them. Some of these were drawn up with a view to enlarge upon the transactions of the times; and in all of them he is more diffuse and luxuriant, than, it is to be presumed, he would have been in a general exposition. But they abound with a rich variety of sacred learning, communicated in a manner ever pleasing, and ever instructive. If at any time he takes us out of the road, it is to show us a fine country, and we are still in company with Erasmus. He considers a Psalm, as it may relate to Christ, either suffering or triumphant; as it may concern the church, whether consisting of Jews or Gentiles, whether in adversity or prosperity, through the several stages and periods of its existence; and as it may be applicable to the different states and circumstances of individuals, during the trials and temptations which they meet with, in the course of their Christian pilgrimage and warfare here below, till, having overcome their last enemy, they shall sit down with their Lord in his kingdom; when the scheme of prophecy shall receive its final accomplishment, and "the MYSTERY OF GOD BE FINISHED."‡

It is obvious, that every part of the Psalter, when explicated according to this Scriptural and primitive method, is rendered universally "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness;" and the propriety immediately appears of its having always been used in the devotional way, both by the Jewish and the Christian church. With regard to the Jews, Bishop Chandler very pertinently remarks, that "they must have understood David, their

* Omnes penè Psalmi Christi personam sustinent, ——Filium ad patrem, id est Christum ad Deum verba facientem representant.

* Enchirid. Mil. Christ. in Præfat. Canon. 5 et passim.

† Lib. xxv. Epist. 11. edit. Froben. 1083, edit. Cler. Non semel rogatus sum, quum ab aliis, tum ab Anglorum rege, ut in omnes Psalmos ederem Commentarios; sed deterrebant me quum alia multa, tum illa duo potissimum, quod viderem hoc argumentum, vix posse pro dignitate tractari, nisi quis calleat Hebræorum literas, atque etiam antiquitates; partim quod verebar ne turbâ Commentariorum obscuraretur Sermo Propheticus, citius quam illustraretur.

‡ Rev. x. 7.

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prince, to have been a figure of Messiah. They would not otherwise have made his Psalms part of their daily worship, nor would David have delivered them to the church to be so employed, were it not to instruct and support them in the knowledge and belief of this fundamental article. Was the Messiah not concerned in the Psalms, it were absurd to celebrate, twice a day, in their public devotions, the events of one man's life, who was deceased so long ago as to have no relation now to the Jews, and the circumstances of their affairs; or to transcribe whole passages from them, into their prayers for the coming of the Messiah."* Upon the same principle, it is easily seen, that the objections which may seem to lie against the use of Jewish services in Christian congregations, cease at once. Thus, it may be said, Are we concerned with the affairs of David and of Israel? Have we anything to do with the ark and the temple? They are no more. Are we to go up to Jerusalem, and to worship on Sion? They are desolated and trodden under foot by the Turks. Are we to sacrifice young bullocks, according to the law? The law is abolished, never to be observed again. Do we pray for victory over Moab, Edom, and Philistia; or for deliverance from Babylon? There are no such nations, no such places in the world. What then do we mean, when, taking such expressions into our mouths, we utter them in our own persons, as parts of our devotions, before God? Assuredly we must mean a spiritual Jerusalem and Sion; a spiritual ark and temple; a spiritual law; spiritual sacrifices; and spiritual victories over spiritual enemies; all described under the old names, which are still retained, though "old things are passed away, and all things are become new."† By substituting Messiah for David, the Gospel for the law, the church Christian for that of Israel, and the enemies of the one for those of the other, the Psalms are made our own. Nay, they are, with more fulness and propriety, applied now to the substance, than they were of old to the "shadow of good things then to come."‡ And, therefore, ever since the commencement of the Christian era, the church hath chosen to celebrate the Gospel mysteries in the words of these ancient hymns, rather than to compose for that purpose new ones of her own. For, let it not pass unobserved that, when, upon the first publication of the Gospel, the apostles had occasion to utter their transports of joy, on their being counted worthy to suffer for the name of their dear Lord and Master, which was then opposed by Jew and Gentile, they brake forth into an application of the second Psalm to the transactions then before their eyes: see Acts, iv. 25. The primitive Christians constantly followed this method, in their devotions; and particularly when, delivered out of the hands of persecuting tyrants by the victories of Constantine, they praised God for his goodness, and the glorious success and establishment of Christ's religion, no words were found so exquisitely adapted to the purpose, as those of David, in the xcvith, xcviiith, and other Psalms—"Sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord, all the earth. Sing unto the Lord, and praise his name: be telling of his salvation from day to day. Declare his honor unto the heathen, his worship unto all people," &c. &c. &c. In these, and the like Psalms, we continue to praise God, for all his spiritual mercies in Christ, to this day.

The Psalms, thus applied, have advantages which no fresh compositions, however finely executed, can possibly have; since, besides their incomparable fitness to express our sentiments, they are, at the same time, memorials of, and appeals to, former mercies and deliverances; they are acknowledgments of prophecies accomplished; they point out the connection between the old and new dispensations, thereby teaching us to admire and adore the wisdom of God displayed in both, and furnishing, while we read or sing them, an inexhaustible variety of the noblest matter that can engage the contemplations of man.

Why is the mind more than ordinarily affected, and either melted into sorrow, or transported with joy, when, on the days set apart for the commemoration of our Saviour's birth, passion, resurrection, &c., the Proper Psalms are read, which the church hath appointed, following herein the directions of evangelists and apostles, and the usage of the early ages? Why, but because, by such appointment, we are necessarily put upon transferring our ideas from the complaints or exultations of David and Israel, to those of a suffering or glorified Messiah, of whose sufferings or glories we participate, as members of his mystical body? And how much more intense would be the effect, if, in the sermons preached on those occasions, such Proper

* Defence of Christianity, First Part, p. 241.

† 2 Cor. v. 17. Ergo arrige aures, Christiane Lector, et ubi talia in Davide legeris, tu mihi fac cogites, non Arcam, fragile lignum, aut Tabernaculum contectum pellibus; non urbem lapidibus compositam; non Templum divinæ Majestati angustum; sed Christi et Ecclesiæ Sacramenta, sed vivos lapides, Christo angulari lapidi coaptatos; sed ipsam Eucharistiam præsentis Dei testem; denique cæleste regnum et æternam felicitatem. Bossuet, Dissertat. de Psal. cap. i. ad fin.

‡ Heb. x. 1.

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Psalms were expounded to the people, and their propriety evinced, as it might easily be! Discourses of this kind would make the hearts of the auditors to "burn within them;" and men would cease to wonder, that three thousand Jews were converted to the faith by St. Peter's animated discourse on part of the sixteenth Psalm. Were believers once brought well acquainted with these Proper Psalms, they would be better enabled to study and apply the rest, which might likewise be explained to them, at different times, and certainly afford the finest subjects on which a Christian orator can apply his eloquence. That this was done in the primitive church, we learn from the exposition of the Psalms left us by St. Chrysostom in the east, and St. Augustin in the west, those expositions still subsisting in the form of homilies, as delivered to their respective congregations. Is it not to be feared that, for want of such instructions, the repetition of the Psalms, as performed by multitudes, is but one degree above mechanism? And is it not a melancholy reflection to be made, at the close of a long life, that, after reciting them, at proper seasons, through the greatest part of it, no more should be known of their true meaning and application, than when the Psalter was first taken in hand at school?

Many sensible and well-disposed persons, therefore, who, when they read or sing the Psalms, desire to read and to sing "with the spirit and the understanding," have long called for a commentary which might enable them to do so, which might not only explain the literal sense of these divine compositions, and show how they may be accommodated to our temporal affairs, as members of civil society;* but might also unfold the mysteries of the kingdom of God, which are involved in them, and teach their application to us, as members of that spiritual and heavenly society of which Christ Jesus is the head, and for whose use, in every age, they were intended by their omniscient Author. A work of this kind, though often desired, has never yet been executed, upon any regular and consistent plan. The survey of a province in theology, hitherto almost unoccupied among the moderns, which promised a great deal of pleasing as well as profitable employment, gave birth to the attempt which hath been made to cultivate it, in the ensuing Commentary; in which the author has only endeavored to evince, by an induction of particulars, the truth of what so many learned and good men have asserted in general, concerning the prophetical, or evangelical, import of the Psalter. Dr. Hammond, in the preface to his Annotations, tells us, he chose to leave every man to make applications of this kind for himself, finding he had work enough upon his hands in the literal way. But so much having been done by him, and other able critics, in that way, it seems to be now time that something should be done in the other, and some directions given, in a case where directions cannot but be greatly wanted.

Very few of the Psalms, comparatively, appear to be simply prophetical, and to belong only to Messiah, without the intervention of any other person. Most of them, it is apprehended, have a double sense, which stands upon this ground and foundation, that the ancient patriarchs, prophets, priests, and kings, were typical characters, in their several offices, and in the more remarkable passages of their lives, their extraordinary depressions, and miraculous exaltations, foreshowing Him who was to arise, as the Head of the holy family, the great Prophet, the true Priest, the everlasting King. The Israelitish polity, and the law of Moses, were purposely framed after the example and shadow of things spiritual and heavenly; and the events which happened to the ancient people of God, were designed to shadow out parallel occurrences, which should afterwards take place, in the accomplishment of man's redemption, and the rise and progress of the Christian church. For this reason, the Psalms composed for the use of Israel, and Israel's monarch, and by them accordingly used at the time, do admit of an application to us, who are now "the Israel of God,"* and to our Redeemer, who is the King of this Israel.†

Nor will this seem strange to us, if we reflect, that the same divine person, who inspired the Psalms, did also foreknow and predispose all the events of which he intended them to treat. And hence it is evident, that

* A concern for the present peace and prosperity of the world, and of that kingdom in it to which we belong, ought ever to be entertained and cherished by the most exalted Christian. And if this part of the subject should, at any time, in the following work, appear to be but slightly touched upon, the reason is, because it lies obvious upon the surface, and has been so frequently inculcated by other expositors. Nor are mankind indeed so liable to forget the relation they bear to the world, as they are to overlook that which subsists between them and their Creator and Redeemer.

* Gal. vi. 16.

† That expressions and descriptions in human writings are often so framed as to admit of a double sense, without any impropriety or confusion, is shown by the very learned Mr. Merrick, in his excellent Observations on Dr. Benson's Essay concerning the Unity of Sense, &c. subjoined to his Annotations on the Psalms.

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the spiritual sense is, and must be, peculiar to the Scriptures; because of those persons and transactions only, which are there mentioned and recorded, can it be affirmed for certain, that they were designed to be figurative. And should any one attempt to apply the narrative of Alexander's expedition by Quintus Curtius, or the Commentaries of Cæsar, as the New Testament writers have done, and taught us to do, the histories of the Old, he would find himself unable to proceed three steps with consistency and propriety. The argument, therefore, which would infer the absurdity of supposing the Scriptures to have a spiritual sense, from the acknowledged absurdity of supposing histories or poems merely human to have it, is inconclusive; the sacred writings differing, in this respect, from all other writings in the world, as much as the nature of the transactions which they relate differs from that of all other transactions, and the author who relates them differs from all other authors.

"This double, or secondary, sense of prophecy, was so far from giving offence to Lord Bacon, that he speaks of it with admiration, as one striking argument of its divinty. *In sorting the prophecies of Scripture with their events, we must allow,* says he, *for that latitude which is agreeable and familiar unto divine prophecies, being of the nature of the Author, with whom* a thousand years are but as one day; *and therefore they are not fulfilled punctually at once, but have springing and germinant accomplishment through many ages, though the height, or fulness of them, may refer to some one age.*

"But, that we may not mistake, or pervert, this fine observation of our great philosopher, it may be proper to take notice, that the reason of it holds, in such prophecies only as respect the several successive parts of one system; which being intimately connected together, may be supposed to come within the view and contemplation of the same prophecy; whereas it would be endless, and one sees not on what grounds of reason, we are authorized to look out for the accomplishment of prophecy, in any casual unrelated events of general history. The Scripture speaks of prophecy, as respecting Jesus, that is, as being one connected scheme of Providence, of which the Jewish dispensation makes a part: so that here we are led to expect that *springing and germinant accomplishment*, which is mentioned. But had the Jewish law been complete in itself, and totally unrelated to the Christian, the general principle—*that a thousand years are with God but as one day*—would no more justify us in extending a Jewish prophecy to Christian events, because perhaps it was eminently fulfilled in them, than it would justify us in extending it to any other signally corresponding events whatsoever. It is only when the prophet hath one uniform connected design before him, that we are authorized to use this latitude of interpretation. For then the prophetic spirit naturally runs along the several parts of *such* design, and unites the remotest events with the nearest; the style of the prophet, in the meantime, so adapting itself to this double prospect, as to paint the near and subordinate event in terms that *emphatically* represent the distant and more considerable. So that, with this explanation, nothing can be more just or philosophical, than the idea which Lord Bacon suggests of divine prophecy.

"The great scheme of redemption, we are now considering, being the only scheme in the plan of Providence, which, as far as we know, hath been prepared and dignified by a continued system of prophecy, at least this being the only scheme to which we have seen a prophetic system applied, men do not so readily apprehend the doctrine of *double senses* in prophecy, as they would do if they saw it exemplified in other cases. But what the history of mankind does not supply, we may represent to ourselves by many obvious suppositions; which cannot justify, indeed, such a scheme of things, but may facilitate the conception of it."*

In allegories framed by man, the groundwork is generally fiction,† because of the difficulty of finding one true series of facts, which shall exactly represent another. But the great Disposer of events, "known unto whom are all his works," from the beginning to the end of time, was able to effect this; and the Scripture allegories are therefore equally true in the letter and in the spirit of them. The events signifying, no less than those signified, really happened as they are said to have done.‡ Why the allegories of this most perfect form, with which the book of God abounds, and which are all pregnant with truths of the highest import, should be

* Bishop Hurd's excellent Introduction to the Study of the Prophecies. Serm. iii.

† I say, "generally," since, as the above cited Mr. Merrick justly observes, "It is possible (for example) in a complimental address to a modern statesman, or general, to relate the actions of some ancient patriot of the same character, in such a manner, that the parallel intended to be drawn between them, shall be readily known, and the praises expressly bestowed on the one, be transferred, by the reader's own application, to the other."

‡ Neque propterea ab historico, sive literali atque immediato, ut aiunt, sensu aberrare nos oportet; quin eo erit clarior et fundiator secretioris illius intelligentiæ sensus, quo typum ipsum, hoc est historiam ac literam figemus certius. Bossuet. Dissertat. in Psal. ad finem.

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treated with neglect and contempt, while the imperfect allegories of man's devising are universally sought after and admired, as the most pleasing and efficacious method of conveying instruction, it is not easy to say. Why should it not afford a believer as much delight, to contemplate the lineaments of his Saviour, portrayed in one of the patriarchs, as to be informed, that the character of Iapis was designed by Virgil to adumbrate that of Antonius Musa, physician to Augustus? Or why should not a discourse upon the redemption of the church, as foreshadowed by the exodus of Israel, have as many admirers among Christians, as a dissertation, however ingeniously composed, on the descent of Æneas to the infernal regions, considered as typical of an initiation into the Eleusinian mysteries.

A learned, judicious, and most elegant writer of the present age hath stated and illustrated the subject we are now upon, with a felicity of thought and expression peculiar to himself. I shall endeavor to gratify the English reader with a view of his sentiments. The beauties of his language are not to be translated.

"It would be an arduous and adventurous undertaking to attempt to lay down the rules observed in the conduct of the Mystic Allegory: so diverse are the modes in which the Holy Spirit has thought proper to communicate his counsels to different persons upon different occasions; inspiring and directing the minds of the prophets according to his good pleasure; at one time vouchsafing more full and free discoveries of future events; while, at another, he is more obscure and sparing in his intimations. From hence, of course, ariseth a great variety in the Scripture usage of this kind of allegory, as to the manner in which the spiritual sense is couched under the other. Sometimes it can hardly break forth and show itself at intervals through the literal, which meets the eye as the ruling sense, and seems to have taken entire possession of the words and phrases. On the contrary, it is much oftener the capital figure in the piece, and stands confessed at once by such splendor of language, that the letter, in its turn, is thrown into shades, and almost totally disappears. Sometimes it shines with a constant equable light, and sometimes it darts upon us on a sudden, like a flash of lightning from the clouds. But a composition is never more truly elegant and beautiful, than when the two senses, alike conspicuous, run parallel together through the whole poem, mutually corresponding with, and illustrating each other. I will produce an undoubted instance or two of this kind, which will show my meaning, and confirm what has hitherto been advanced on this subject of the mystic allegory.

"The establishment of David upon his throne, notwithstanding the opposition made to it by his enemies, is the subject of the second Psalm. David sustains in it a twofold character, literal and allegorical. If we read over the Psalm, first with an eye to the literal David, the meaning is obvious, and put out of all dispute by the sacred history. There is indeed an uncommon glow in the expression, and sublimity in the figures, and the diction is now and then exaggerated, as it were on purpose to intimate, and lead us to the contemplation of higher and more important matters concealed within. In compliance with this admonition, if we take another survey of the Psalm, as relative to the person and concerns of the spiritual David, a nobler series of events instantly rises to view, and the meaning becomes more evident, as well as exalted. The coloring, which may perhaps seem too bold and glaring for the king of Israel, will no longer appear so, when laid upon his great antitype. After we have thus attentively considered the subjects apart, let us look at them together, and we shall behold the full beauty and majesty of this most charming poem. We shall perceive the two senses, very distinct from each other, yet conspiring in perfect harmony, and bearing a wonderful resemblance in every feature and lineament, while the analogy between them is so exactly preserved, that either may pass for the original from whence the other was copied. New light is continually cast upon the phraseology, fresh weight and dignity are added to the sentiment, till gradually ascending from things below to things above, from human affairs to those which are divine, they bear the great important theme upwards with them, and at length place it in the height and brightness of heaven.

"What hath been observed with regard to this Psalm, may also be applied to the seventy-second; the subject of which is of the same kind, and treated in the same manner. Its title might be, *The Inauguration of Solomon*. The scheme of the allegory is alike in both; but a diversity of matter occasions an alteration in the diction. For whereas one is employed in celebrating the magnificent triumphs of victory, it is the design of the other to draw a pleasing picture of peace, and of that felicity which is her inseparable attendant. The style is, therefore, of a more even and temperate sort, and more richly ornamented. It aboundeth not with those sudden changes of the person

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speaking, which dazzle and astonish; but the imagery is borrowed from the delightful scenes with which creation cheers the sight, and the pencil of the divine artist is dipped in the softer colors of nature. And here we may take notice how peculiarly adapted to the genius of this kind of allegory the parabolical style is, on account of that great variety of natural images to be found in it. For as these images are capable of being employed in the illustration of things divine and human, between which there is a certain analogy maintained, so they easily afford that ambiguity which is necessary in this species of composition, where the language is applicable to each sense, and obscure in neither; it comprehends both parts of the allegory, and may be clearly and distinctly referred to one or the other."*

The scheme of exposition so beautifully delineated and illustrated in two instances by this truly valuable author, has been extended, in theory, by another learned writer, to a great part of the Psalter; and that upon a principle deduced from the attributes of God, and the nature and design of the divine dispensations; though his own labors, like those of Dr. Hammond, were employed chiefly in literal criticism. His reasoning is as follows—

"In this point (namely, the application of the Psalms to the mysteries of the Gospel) I am very clear. The Jews only, as a nation, acknowledged the one supreme God, under the name of Jehovah; they must be, therefore, his peculiar people. There is nothing capricious in this; they are correlates, and of necessity answer reciprocally to each other. Hence that singular intercourse between God and them. Hence, among other instances of his favor, his communication of himself to them by supernatural ways of Oracle, Inspiration, &c. When the acknowledgment of the one God branched itself, from this Jewish stock, over the face of the earth, and by that means he was become the God of all mankind, they must all, for the same reason, become his people. As God is ever the same, and his doings uniform, his conduct towards mankind must exactly be proportioned to his conduct towards the Jewish nation. Let us, therefore, place God in common over them both; and there will be—on one side, the Jewish nation; and on the other, mankind: on one side, Canaan, and a national prosperity; on the other, heaven and human happiness: on one side, a redemption from Egyptian servitude, and national evils; on the other, a redemption of the whole human race from absolute evil: on one side, national crimes atoned by national ceremonies, sacrifices, priests; on the other, sins expiated by the one universal sacrifice of Jesus Christ: on one side, national and temporary saviours, kings, prophets, &c.; on the other, all this universal, and eternal: on one side, the Law, and every branch of it, adapted to a favorite nation; on the other, the everlasting Gospel, suited to all mankind. It is impossible, therefore, that God can say anything to David, under the quality of king of this chosen nation, which he does not speak, at the same time, to Jesus Christ, as King of all the elect; and that in a truer and nobler sense. To each of them he speaks in a sense adapted to the nature of their respective kingdoms. Nor is the latter a bare accommodation of words, but the first and highest meaning of them, and which only, absolutely speaking, can be the true sense of God; the other being this sense, confined to a particular circumstance; in other words, an absolute truth, made history and matter of fact. This is a principle, which shows, that, far from denying the Christian application, I consider the literal and historical sense only as a kind of vehicle for it."*

Upon this plan it is, that many of the Psalms are interpreted in the following sheets.

In such of them as were written by David, and treat of his affairs, that extraordinary person is considered as an illustrious representative of Messiah, who is more than once foretold under the name of David, and to whom are applied, in the New Testament, Psalms, which do undoubtedly, in the letter of them, relate to David, and were composed on occasion of particular occurrences which befell him; a circumstance in theology, to be accounted for upon no other principle.

When, therefore, he describeth himself as one hated and persecuted without a cause; as one accused of crimes which he never committed, and suffering for sins the very thoughts of which he abhorred; as one whose life was imbittered by affliction, and his soul overwhelmed with sorrows; yet, withal, as one whom no troubles could induce to renounce his trust and confidence in the promises of God concerning him, when he repeated his resolutions of adhering to the divine law, setting forth its various excellencies, and the comforts which it afforded him in the days of adversity; when he complaineth of that implacable malice, and unrelenting fury, with which he was pursued by Saul and his attend-

* Bishop Lowth on the Hebrew Poetry, Lect. xi.

* Preface to an Essay towards a New English Version of the Book of Psalms, by the Reverend Mr. Mudge.

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ants, by Doeg the Edomite, by rebellious Absalom, traitorous Ahithophel, &c.; and when, contrary to all appearances, he predicteth their destruction, with his own final exaltation; in expounding the Psalms of this cast and complexion, it hath been my endeavor to direct the reader's thoughts to parallel circumstances, which present themselves in the history of the true David; his sorrows and sufferings; his resignation under them all; his obedience to the will of his Father; the temper and behavior of his betrayers and murderers; the prophecies of judgments to be inflicted upon them, and of glory to be conferred upon him. As the Psalter was the liturgy of the Jewish church, of which our Lord was a member, and to which he therefore entirely conformed during his abode and humiliation upon earth, he might pour forth his complaints, and "offer up his prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears,"* in the very words which his progenitor David had before used under his own troubles, but which were given by inspiration, with a view to the case of that blessed person whom, in those troubles, he had the honor to prefigure.

Other Psalms there are, which disclose far different scenes. In them the sorrows of David are at an end, and the day of his deliverance hath already dawned. The heavens are opened, and Jehovah appeareth in the cause of his afflicted servant. He descendeth from above, encompassed with clouds and darkness, preceded by fire and hail, proclaimed by thunder and earthquake, and attended by lightnings and whirlwinds. The mountains smoke, and the rocks melt before him; the foundations of the globe are uncovered, and the deep from beneath is moved at his presence. The adversary is dismayed and confounded; opposition, in the height of its career, feels the blast through all its powers, and instantly withers away. The anointed of God, according to his original designation, is at length elevated to the throne; his sceptre is extended over the nations; the temple is planned by him, and erected by his son; the services of religion are appointed in perfect order and beauty; Jerusalem becometh a praise in all the earth: and the kingdom is established in honor, peace, and felicity. If in Psalms of the former kind the holy Jesus might behold those persecutions and sufferings, under which he was to be humbled, and to mourn, during his pilgrimage here below; in Psalms of this latter sort, he might strengthen and console himself, as a man, "touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and tempted in all points like as we are," by viewing "the glory that should follow;" by contemplating the manifestation of the Father in favor of his beloved Son; his own joyful resurrection, triumphant ascension, and magnificent inauguration; the conversion of the world, and the establishment of the church; events, which were foreshadowed by those above mentioned; and to which, when the strongest expressions made use of by the divine Psalmist are applied, they will no longer appear hyperbolical; especially if we bear in mind, that these prophetic descriptions wait for their full and final accomplishment at that day, when the mystical "body of Christ," having "filled up that which is behind of his afflictions,"* shall also, amidst the pangs and convulsions of departing nature, arise from the dead, and ascend into heaven; where all the members of that body, which have been afflicted and have mourned with their Lord and Master, shall be comforted and glorified together with him.†

In some of the Psalms, David appears as one suffering for his sins. When man speaks of sin, he speaks of what is his own; and, therefore, every Psalm where sin is confessed to be the cause of sorrow, belongs originally and properly to us, as fallen sons of Adam, like David and all other men. This is the case of the fifty-first, and the rest of those which are styled Penitential Psalms, and have always been used in the church as such. Sometimes, indeed, it happens, that we meet with heavy complaints of the number and burden of sins, in Psalms from which passages are quoted in the New Testament as uttered by our Redeemer, and in which there seems to be no change of person from beginning to end. We are assured, for instance, by the apostle, Heb. x. 5, that the sixth, seventh, and eighth verses of the fortieth Psalm, "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire," &c. are spoken by Messiah coming to abolish the legal sacrifices, by the oblation of himself once for all. The same person, to appear-

* Heb. v. 7.

* Coloss. i. 24.

† Neque prætermittendum illud Augustini passim; tunc Psalmos videri suavissimos, ac divinissimâ luce perfusos, cum in his caput et membra, Christum et Ecclesiam, sive apertè propalatos, sive latenter designatos intelligimus—Quare iterum atque iterum erigamus animos; atque ubi Davidem atque Solomonem; ubi Davidis hostes, Saulem, Achitophelem, alios; ubi bella et pacem, captivitatem, libertatem, ac cætera ejusmodi audimus; tum animo infigamus Christum, et Ecclesiam laboribus periculisque exercitam, atque inter adversa et prospera peregrinantem; tum sanctorum persecutores, non modò visibiles, sed etiam invisibiles, illas atque aereas potestates, pugnasque in hac vita perpetes, ac secuturam postea pacem sempiternam. Bossuet. Dissertat. in Psalm. ad fin

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ance, continues speaking, and, only three verses after, complains in the following terms: "Innumerable evils have compassed me about, mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head, therefore my heart faileth me." So again, there are no less than five quotations from different parts of the sixty-ninth Psalm, all concurring to inform us that Christ is the speaker through that whole Psalm. Yet the fifth verse of it runs thus: "O God, thou knowest my foolishness, and my אשם guiltiness is not hid from thee." The solution of this difficulty given, and continually insisted on, in the writings of the Fathers, is this; that Christ, in the day of his passion, standing charged with the sin and guilt of his people, speaks of such their sin and guilt as if they were his own, appropriating to himself those debts for which, in the capacity of a surety, he had made himself responsible. The lamb which, under the law, was offered for sin, took the name אשם, "guilt," because the guilt contracted by the offerer was transferred to that innocent creature, and typically expiated by its blood.* Was not this exactly the case, in truth and reality, with the Lamb of God? "He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; but he bare our sins in his own body on the tree.† He was made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."‡ Christ and the church compose one mystical person, of which he is the head, and the church the body; and as the body speaks by the head, and the head for the body, he speaks of her sin, and she of his righteousness; which consideration is at the same time a key to any claims of righteousness made in the Psalms by her, and to any confession of sin made by him. This seems to be a satisfactory account of the matter. Such, at least, appears to have been the idea generally adopted and received, in the first ages of the Christian church; a circumstance which, it is presumed, will be deemed a sufficient apology for the author, if, in the explication of such passages, he hath ventured to proceed accordingly. Nay, and even in reciting the Penitential Psalms, when the unhappy sufferer is ready to sink down under that weight of woe which sin hath laid upon him, if he will extend his thoughts, as he is sometimes directed to do, to that holy and most innocent person, who felt and sorrowed so much for us all, he will thereby furnish himself with the best argument for patience, and an inexhaustible source of comfort. Nor can it, indeed, well be imagined, that our blessed Lord, as a member of the Jewish church, and an attendant on the service of the synagogue, though conscious to himself of no sin, did not frequently join with his brethren "according to the flesh," in the repetition of the Penitential, as well as the other Psalms, on the days of humiliation and expiation, when the use of them might be prescribed. If, from his circumcision to his crucifixion, "he bare our sins in his own body;" why should it be thought strange, that he should confess them, on our behalf, with his own mouth?

The offence taken at the supposed uncharitable and vindictive spirit of the imprecations, which occur in some of the Psalms, ceases immediately, if we change the imperative for the future, and read, not "LET THEM BE confounded," &c. but, "THEY SHALL BE confounded," of which the Hebrew is equally capable. Such passages will then have no more difficulty in them, than the other frequent predictions of divine vengeance in the writings of the prophets, or denunciations of it in the Gospels, intended to warn, to alarm, and to lead sinners to repentance, that they may fly from the wrath to come. This is Dr. Hammond's observation; who very properly remarks, at the same time, that in many places of this sort, as particularly in Psalm cix. (and the same may be said of Psal. lxix.) it is reasonable to resolve, that Christ himself speaketh in the prophet; as being the person there principally concerned, and the completion most signal in many circumstances there mentioned; the succession especially of Matthias to the apostleship of Judas. It is true, that in the citation made by St. Peter from Psal. cix. in Acts, i. 20, as also in that made by St. Paul from Ps. lxix. in Rom. xi. 9, the imperative form is preserved; "LET his habitation be void," &c. "LET their table be made a snare," &c. But it may be considered, that the apostles generally cited from the Greek of the LXX version; and took it as they found it, making no alteration, when the passage, as it there stood, was sufficient to prove the main point which it was adduced to prove. If the imprecatory form be still contended for, all that can be meant by it, whether uttered by the prophet, by Messiah, or by ourselves, must be a solemn ratification of the just judgments of the Almighty against his impenitent enemies, like what we find ascribed to the blessed spirits in heaven, when such judgments were executed: Rev. xi. 17, 18, xvi. 5, 6, 7: see Merrick's Annotations on Ps. cix. and Witsii Miscellan. Sacr. lib. i. cap. xviii. sect. 24. But by the future rendering the verbs, every possible objection

* See Levit. v. 6. † 1 Pet. ii. 22. ‡ 2 Cor. v. 21.

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is precluded at once. This method has therefore been adopted in the ensuing Commentary.

Of the Psalms which relate to Israel, some are employed in celebrating the mercies vouchsafed them, from their going forth out of Egypt, to their complete settlement in Canaan. These were the constant standing subjects of praise and thanksgiving in the Israelitish church. But we are taught, by the writers of the New Testament, to consider this part of their history as one continued figure, or allegory. We are told, that there is another spiritual Israel of God; other children of Abraham, and heirs of the promise; another circumcision; another Egypt, from the bondage of which they are redeemed; another wilderness, through which they journey; other dangers and difficulties which there await them; other bread from heaven for their support; and another rock to supply them with living water; other enemies to overcome; another land of Canaan, and another Jerusalem, which they are to obtain, and to possess for ever. In the same light are to be viewed the various provocations and punishments, captivities and restorations, of old Israel afterwards, concerning which it is likewise true, that they "happened unto them for ensamples,"* types, or figures, "and were written for our admonition."† Care has therefore been taken to open and apply, for that salutary purpose, the Psalms which treat of the above-mentioned particulars.

What is said in the Psalms occasionally of the law and its ceremonies, sacrifices, ablutions, and purifications; of the tabernacle and temple, with the services therein performed; and of the Aaronical priesthood; all this Christians transfer to the new law; to the oblation of Christ; to justification by his blood, and sanctification by his Spirit; to the true tabernacle, or temple not made with hands; and to what was therein done for the salvation of the world, by Him who was, in one respect, a Sacrifice; in another, a Temple; and in a third, an High Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedek. That such was the intention of these legal figures, is declared at large in the Epistle to the Hebrews: and they are of great assistance to us now, in forming our ideas of the realities to which they correspond. "Under the Jewish economy," says the excellent Mr. Pascal, "truth appeared but in a figure; in heaven it is open, and without a veil; in the church militant it is so veiled, as to be yet discerned by its correspondence to the figure. As the figure was first built upon the truth, so the truth is now distinguishable by the figure." The variety of strong expressions used by David in the nineteenth and the hundred and nineteenth Psalms, to extol the enlivening, saving, healing, comforting efficacy of a law, which, in the letter of it, whether ceremonial or moral, without pardon and grace, could minister nothing but condemnation, do sufficiently prove, that David understood the spirit of it, which was the Gospel itself.* And if any, who recited those Psalms, had not the same idea, it was not the fault of the Law or of the Psalms, of Moses or of David, or of him who inspired both, but it was their own; as it is that of the Jews, at this hour, though their prophecies have now been fulfilled, and their types realized. "He that takes his estimate of the Jewish religion from the grossness of the Jewish multitude," as the last cited author observes, "cannot fail of making a very wrong judgment. It is to be sought for in the sacred writings of the prophets, who have given us sufficient assurance, that they understood the law not according to the letter. Our religion, in like manner, is true and divine in the Gospels, and in the preaching of the apostles; but it appears utterly disfigured in those who maim or corrupt it."

Besides the figures supplied by the history of Israel, and by the law, there is another set of images often employed in the Psalms, to describe the blessings of redemption. These are borrowed from the natural world, the manner of its original production, and the operations continually carried on in it. The visible

* Gr. Τυποι.

† 1 Cor. x. 11.

* Hæc inter, veri et spirituales Judæi, hoc est, ante Christum Christi discipuli, altiora cogitabant, et rerum cœlestium Sacramenta venerati, novam Jerusalem, novum templum, novam arcam intuebantur. Bossuet, Dissertat. in Psal. cap. i. Lex, juxta Spiritum accepta, ipsum erat Evangelium, sub veteribus figuris delitescens, et cerimoniarum velis obtectum, ab ipso quidem Mose (imprimis in Deuteronomio) aliquatenus et pro temporum ratione explicatum, a prophetis verò succedentibus (ut visum est Divinæ Sapientiæ), dilucidius ostensum, demum a Christo et apostolis plenissimè et luce ipso sole clariori patefactum. Bulli Opera per Grabe, p. 614.—If the Jews, as our Saviour tells them, "thought they had eternal life in their Scriptures," they must needs have understood them in a spiritual sense: and I know not what other spiritual sense, that should lead them to the expectation of eternal life, they could put on their Scriptures, but that prophetical or typical sense, which respected the Messiah. Jesus expressly asserts, at the same time, that their "Scriptures testified of Him." How generally they did so, he explained at large, in that remarkable conversation with two of his disciples after his resurrection; when, "beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself." Hurd's Introd. to the Study of the Prophecies, Serm. ii.

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works of God are formed to lead us, under the direction of his word, to a knowledge of those which are invisible; they give us ideas, by analogy, of a new creation rising gradually, like the old one, out of darkness and deformity, until at length it arrives at the perfection of glory and beauty; so that while we praise the Lord for all the wonders of his power, wisdom, and love, displayed in a system which is to wax old and perish, we may therein contemplate, as in a glass, those new heavens, and that new earth, of whose duration there shall be no end.* The sun, that fountain of life, and heart of the world, that bright leader of the armies of heaven, enthroned in glorious majesty; the moon shining with a lustre borrowed from his beams; the stars glittering by night in the clear firmament; the air giving breath to all things that live and move; the interchanges of light and darkness; the course of the year, and the sweet vicissitudes of seasons; the rain and the dew descending from above, and the fruitfulness of the earth caused by them; the bow bent by the hands of the Most High, which compasseth the heaven about with a glorious circle; the awful voice of thunder, and the piercing power of lightning; the instincts of animals,† and the qualities of vegetables and minerals; the great and wide sea, with its unnumbered inhabitants; all these are ready to instruct us in the mysteries of faith, and the duties of morality:—

> They speak their Maker as they can,
> But want and ask the tongue of man.
> PARNELL.

The advantages of Messiah's reign are represented, in some of the Psalms, under images of this kind. We behold a renovation of all things, and the world as it were, new created, breaks forth into singing. The earth is crowned with sudden verdure and fertility; the field is joyful, and all that is in it; the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord; the floods clap their hands in concert, and ocean fills up the mighty chorus, to celebrate the advent of the Great King.

Similar to these, are the representations of spiritual mercies by temporal deliverances from sickness, prison, danger of perishing in storms at sea, and from the sundry kinds of calamity and death, to which the body of man is subject; as also by scenes of domestic felicity, and by the flourishing state of well-ordered communities, especially that of Israel in Canaan, which, while the benediction of Jehovah rested upon it, was a picture of heaven itself. The foregoing and every other species of the sacred imagery, if there be any other not hitherto included, it hath been the author's main endeavor to illustrate. And a view of what is done in this way will, it is humbly hoped, afford some reason to think, there may not be that necessary connection, which a late noble writer has been pleased to suppose, between DEVOTION and DULNESS.

The Psalms which remain are such as treat, in plain terms, without figures or examples, of wisdom and folly, righteousness and sin; the happiness produced by one, and the misery caused by the other; of particular virtues and vices; of the vanity of human life; of the attributes of God; of that patience with which the faithful should learn to bear the sight of wickedness triumphant in this world, looking forward to the day of final retribution; and subjects of the like nature. As Psalms of this kind call for little in the expository way, the general doctrines or precepts implied in them, or suggested by them, are drawn forth in short reflections, attempted after the manner of those made by Father Quesnel on each verse of the New Testament. The opportunity of doing this, where nothing else seemed to be required, and indeed of doing, upon every occasion, what did seem to be required in any way, was the reason for throwing the work into its present form, rather than that of a paraphrase, or any other. Some repetitions, in a performance of this sort, are unavoidable.

* Read nature; nature is a friend to truth;
Nature is CHRISTIAN, preaches to mankind;
And bids dead matter aid us in our creed.
YOUNG.

† "I believe a good natural philosopher might show, with great reason and probability, that there is scarce beast, bird, reptile, or insect, that does not, in each particular climate, instruct and admonish mankind of some necessary truth for their happiness either in body or mind." Dr. CHEYNE's Philosophical Conjectures on the Preference of Vegetable Food, p. 73. That which a celebrated writer has observed concerning a poet, may perhaps be equally applicable to a divine—"To him nothing can be useless. Whatever is beautiful, and whatever is dreadful, should be familiar to his imagination: he should be conversant with all that is awfully vast, or elegantly little. The plants of the garden, the animals of the wood, the minerals of the earth, and meteors of the sky, should all concur to store his mind with inexhaustible variety; for every idea is useful for the enforcement or decoration of moral or religious truth; and he who knows most, will have most power of diversifying his scenes, and of gratifying his reader with remote allusions, and unexpected instruction. By him, therefore, no kind of knowledge should be overlooked. He should range mountains and deserts for images and resemblances, and picture upon his mind every tree of the forest, and flower of the valley; the crags of the rock, and the mazes of the stream." RASSELAS, chap. x. The reader may see this exemplified in some "Disquisitions on Select Subjects of Scripture," by my worthy friend, the Rev. Mr. JONES, whose labors make it evident, that true philosophy will ever be the handmaid of true divinity.

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But a Commentary on the Book of Psalms is not to be read all at once;* and it was thought better to give the exposition of each Psalm complete in itself, than to refer the reader elsewhere: which, therefore, is only done, when passages of a considerable length occur in two Psalms, without any material difference.

Such is the method the author has taken, such the authorities upon which he has proceeded, and such the rules by which he has directed himself. If consistency and uniformity in the comment have been the result, they will afford, it is hoped, no contemptible argument on its behalf; since it is scarce possible to expound uniformly, on an erroneous plan, so great a variety of figurative language, as is to be found in the book of Psalms.†

Let us stop for a moment, to contemplate the true character of these sacred hymns.

Greatness confers no exemption from the cares and sorrows of life. Its share of them frequently bears a melancholy proportion to its exaltation. This the Israelitish monarch experienced. He sought in piety that peace which he could not find in empire, and alleviated the disquietudes of state with the exercises of devotion.

His invaluable Psalms convey those comforts to others, which they afforded to himself. Composed upon particular occasions, yet designed for general use; delivered out as services for Israelites under the law, yet no less adapted to the circumstances of Christians under the Gospel; they present religion to us in the most engaging dress; communicating truths which philosophy could never investigate, in a style which poetry can never equal: while history is made the vehicle of prophecy, and creation lends all its charms to paint the glories of redemption. Calculated alike to profit and to please, they inform the understanding, elevate the affections, and entertain the imagination. Indited under the influence of Him to whom all hearts are known, and all events foreknown, they suit mankind in all situations, grateful as the manna which descended from above, and conformed itself to every palate. The fairest productions of human wit, after a few perusals, like gathered flowers, wither in our hands, and lose their fragrancy; but these unfading plants of paradise become, as we are accustomed to them, still more and more beautiful; their bloom appears to be daily heightened; fresh odors are emitted, and new sweets extracted from them. He who hath once tasted their excellencies, will desire to taste them yet again: and he who tastes them oftenest will relish them best.

And now, could the author flatter himself, that any one would take half the pleasure in reading the following exposition, which he hath taken in writing it, he would not fear the loss of his labor. The employment detached him from the bustle and hurry of life, the din of politics, and the noise of folly; vanity and vexation flew away for a season care and disquietude came not near his dwelling. He arose, fresh as the morning, to his task; the silence of the night invited him to pursue it; and he can truly say, that food and rest were not preferred before it. Every Psalm improved infinitely upon his acquaintance with it, and no one gave him uneasiness but the last; for then he grieved that his work was done. Happier hours than those which have been spent on these meditations on the Songs of Sion, he never expects to see in this world. Very pleasantly did they pass, and moved smoothly and swiftly along; for when thus engaged, he counted no time. They are gone, but have left a relish and a fragrance upon the mind, and the remembrance of them is sweet.

—But, alas! these are the fond effusions of parental tenderness. Others will view the production with very different eyes; and the harsh voice of inexorable criticism will too soon awaken him from his pleasing dream. He is not insensible, that many learned and good men, whom he does not therefore value and respect the less, have conceived strong prejudices against the scheme of interpretation here pursued; and he knows how little the generality of modern Christians have

* The most profitable way of reading it, perhaps, would be by small portions, often reviewing the text and the comment, and comparing them carefully together: at times when the mind is most free, vacant, and calm; in the morning, more especially, to prepare and fortify it for the business of the day; and in the evening, to recompose, and set it in order, for the approaching season of rest.

† The student in Theology, who is desirous of farther information upon a subject so curious, so entertaining, and so interesting, as that of the figurative language of Scripture, the principles on which it is founded, and the best rules to be observed in the sober and rational interpretation of it, may find satisfaction, by consulting the following authors:—

Lowth's Preface to his Commentary on the Prophets.

Lowth, Prælect. de Sacr. Poes. Heb. Prælect, iv. —xii.

Paschal's Thoughts, sect. x.—xiv.

Hurd's Introd. to the Study of the Prophecies. Serm. ii. iii. iv.

Vitringa, Observat. Sacr. lib. vi. cap. xx. et lib. vii.

————, Præfat. ad Comment. in Jesaiam.

Glassii, Philologia Sacra, lib. ii.

Witsii Miscellan. Sacra, tom. i. lib. iii. cap. iii. lib. ii. Dissert. i. ii. Œconom. Fœd. lib. iv. cap. vi.—x.

Waterland's General Preface to *Scripture Vindicated.*

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been accustomed to speculations of this kind; which, it may likewise, perhaps, be said, will give occasion to the scoffs of our adversaries, the Jews and the deists. Yet, if in the preceding pages it hath been made to appear, that the application of the Psalms to evangelical subjects, times, and circumstances, stands upon firm ground; that it may be prosecuted upon a regular and consistent plan; and that it is not only expedient, but even necessary, to render the use of them in our devotions rational and profitable; will it be presumption in him to hope that, upon a calm and dispassionate review of the matter, prejudices may subside, and be done away? If men, in these days, have not been accustomed to such contemplations, is it not high time they should become so? Can they begin too soon to study, and make themselves masters of a science which promises to its votaries so much entertainment, as well as improvement; which recommends the Scriptures to persons of true taste and genius, as books intended equally for our delight and instruction; which demonstrates the ways of celestial wisdom to be ways of pleasantness, and all her paths to be peace indeed? From the most sober, deliberate, and attentive survey of the sentiments which prevailed upon this point, in the first ages of the church, when the apostolical method of citing and expounding the Psalms was fresh upon the minds of their followers, the author cannot but be confident, that his Commentary, if it had then made its appearance, would have been universally received and approved, as to the general design of it, by the whole Christian world. And, however the Jews, in their present state of alienation and unbelief, may reject and set at naught such applications of their Scriptures to our Messiah and his chosen people, as they certainly will do; he is not less confident, that, whenever the happy and glorious day of their conversion shall come, and the veil shall be taken from their hearts, they will behold the Psalter in that light in which he has endeavored to place it.* As to the deists, they, while they continue such, can have neither lot nor part in this matter; for giving no credit to the Scripture account of things, either in the Old Testament or the New, to discourse with them concerning a connection and analogy subsisting between the one and the other, is to reason about a fifth sense with a man who has only four. For the conviction both of the Jews and deists, other arguments are to be urged; arguments from undeniable miracles openly wrought, and plain prophecies literally fulfilled. Such proofs are "for them that believe not." And such have been repeatedly urged, in their full force, by the many able champions, who have stood forth (success evermore attend their labors!) in defence of the evidences of Christianity. Expositions and meditations, like those in the subsequent pages, serve not, nor are intended to serve, "for them who believe not, but for them who believe:"* who will exercise their faculties in discerning and contemplating the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, and who are going on unto perfection; to increase their faith and inflame their charity; to delight them in prosperity, to comfort them in adversity, to edify them at all times. Such effects, the author doubts not, will be experienced by believers, who will read his book with an honest and good heart, with seriousness and attention; for though he humbly trusts it will not be deemed altogether unworthy a place in the libraries of the learned, he builds chiefly on that approbation which he is solicitous it should receive in the closets of the devout; as considering, that it is LOVE, heavenly LOVE, which "never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part: but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away."† They who find not the wished-for satisfaction in one portion, will find it in another; they who disapprove of an interpretation at the first reading, may, perhaps, approve of it at the second; and they who still continue to disapprove of some particulars, will not therefore disdain to accept the

* "If this appears to be the case in so many of the Psalms (namely, that they are predictive of MESSIAH) how strongly does it justify our Lord's appeal to them as treating of him! And what a noble argument may hence arise, for the conviction and conversion of that extraordinary people, to whom they were originally communicated, when once *the veil that is on their hearts, shall be taken away*, as by the same spirit of prophecy we are assured it shall!" The Bishop of CARLISLE's *Theory of Religion*, p. 176, 6th edit. With what transports of zeal and devotion, of faith and love, will *they* recite these holy hymns, in the day when the whole body of the Jews, returning to the Lord their God, shall acknowledge their unparalleled crime in the murder of their King, and their penitential sorrow for the same, perhaps, as his Lordship intimates, in the words of the fifty-first Psalm: "Deliver me from BLOOD GUILTINESS, O God, thou God of my salvation; and my tongue shall sing aloud thy righteousness. O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise. For thou desirest not SACRIFICE, else would I give it; thou deiightest not in BURNT-OFFERING. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. O do good in thy good pleasure to Zion; build thou the walls of JERUSALEM!"

* 1 Cor. xiv. 22. † 1 Cor. xiii. 8.

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benefit of the rest. He has written to gratify no sect or party, but for the common service of all who call on the name of JESUS, wheresoever dispersed, and howsoever distressed, upon the earth. When he views the innumerable unhappy differences among Christians, all of whom are equally oppressed with the cares and calamities of life, he often calls to mind those beautiful and affecting words which Milton represents Adam as addressing to Eve, after they had wearied themselves with mutual complaints and accusations of each other:—

But rise, let us no more contend, nor blame
Each other, blam'd enough elsewhere; but strive
In offices of love, how we may lighten
Each other's burden in our share of woe.
B. x. V. 958.

Enough has been given to the arts of controversy. Let something be given to the studies of piety and a holy life. If we can once unite in these, our tempers may be better disposed to unite in doctrine. When we shall be duly prepared to receive it, "God may reveal even this unto us." To increase the number of disputes among us, is, therefore, by no means the intent of this publication. The author having, for many years, accustomed himself to consider and apply the Psalms, while he recited them, according to the method now laid down, has never failed to experience the unspeakable benefit of it, both in public and in private; and would wish, if it so pleased God, that death might find him employed in meditations of this kind.* He has likewise frequently taken occasion, in the course of his ministry, to explain a Psalm, upon the same plan, from the pulpit; and whenever he has done so, whether the audience were learned or unlearned, polite or rustic, he has generally had the happiness to find the discourse, in an especial manner, noticed and remembered. But still many may be of a different opinion, who may conscientiously believe the doctrines, and practise the duties of the Gospel, whether they see them shadowed out in the Psalms or not. Such will enjoy their own liberty, and permit their brethren to do the same. Or, if they shall think it necessary to take up the polemical pen, he desires only to receive that treatment, which he has himself shown to every writer, cited or referred to by him.* Instead of engaging in a tedious, and, perhaps, unprofitable altercation upon the subject, he feels himself at present much rather inclined, in such a case, to follow, at his proper distance, the amiable example of his greatly respected Diocesan, who reprinted in England the objections made by a foreign professor, to some parts of his Lectures on the Hebrew Poetry, and left the public to form its own judgment between them.† From that public, the author of the following work is now to expect the determination of his fate. Should its sentence be in his disfavor, nothing further remains to be said, than that he has honestly and faithfully endeavored to serve it, to the utmost of his power, in the way, in which he thought himself best able; and to give the world some account of that time, and those opportunities, which, by the providence of a gracious God, and the munificence of a pious Founder, he has long enjoyed in the happy retirement of a college.

* "I have lost a world of time," said the learned SALMASIUS, on his death-bed; "if I had one year more, I would spend it in reading DAVID'S PSALMS, and PAUL'S EPISTLES."

* Detur igitur erratis meis venia: ipse demum exemplo meo mihi prosim, qui neminem eorum, a quibus dissenserim, contumeliis affeci; qui non, vitio criticorum, in diversæ sententiæ propugnatores acriter invectus sum; qui denique eam veniam antecessoribus meis libens tribui, quam ab iis, qui hæc in manus sumturi sint, velim impetrare. PEARCE in Præfat. ad edit. Cic. de Oratore.

† "In his quæ sunt, quæ mihi minus persuasit Vir Clarissimus, ea malui hoc modo libero lectorum nostrorum judicio permittere, quam in disceptationem et controversiam injucundam, et fortasse infructuosam, vocare." LOWTH, in Præf. ad edit. 2dam Prælect. de Sacra Poesi Hebræorum. "Authors should avoid, as much as they can," says another very learned critic, "replies and rejoinders, the usual consequences of which are, loss of time, and loss of temper. Happy is he who is engaged in controversy with his own passions, and comes off superior; who makes it his endeavor, that his follies and weaknesses may die before him, and who daily meditates on mortality and immortality." JORTIN'S Preface to his Remarks on Ecclesiastical History, p. xxxiv.

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THAT the reader may the more easily turn to such Psalms as will best suit the present state of his mind, according to the different circumstances, whether external or internal, into which, by the changes and chances of life, or the variations of temper and disposition, he may, at any time, be thrown, the common Table of Psalms, classed under their several subjects, is here subjoined.

PRAYERS.

I. *Prayers* for pardon of sin. *Psalm* 6, 25, 38, 51, 130. *Psalms* styled *Penitential*, 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143.

II. *Prayers* composed when the Psalmist was deprived of an opportunity of the public exercise of religion. *Psalm* 42, 43, 63, 84.

III. *Prayers* wherein the Psalmist seems extremely dejected, though not totally deprived of consolation, under his afflictions. *Psalm* 13, 22, 69, 77, 88, 143.

IV. *Prayers* wherein the Psalmist asketh help of GOD, in consideration of his own integrity, and the uprightness of his cause. *Psalm* 7, 17, 26, 35.

V. *Prayers* expressing the firmest trust and confidence in GOD under afflictions. *Psalm* 3, 16, 27, 31, 54, 56, 57, 61, 62, 71, 86.

VI. *Prayers* composed when the people of GOD were under affliction or persecution. *Psalm* 44, 60, 74, 79, 80, 83, 89, 94, 102, 123, 137.

VII. The following are likewise *Prayers* in time of trouble and affliction. *Psalm* 4, 5, 11, 28, 41, 55, 59, 64, 70, 109, 120, 140, 141, 142.

VIII. *Prayers of* INTERCESSION. *Psalm* 20, 67, 122, 132, 144.

PSALMS OF THANKSGIVING.

I. *Thanksgivings* for mercies vouchsafed to particular persons. *Psalm* 9, 18, 22, 30, 34, 40, 75, 103, 108, 116, 118, 138, 144.

II. *Thanksgivings* for mercies vouchsafed to the Israelites in general. *Psalm* 46, 48, 65, 66, 68, 76, 81, 85, 98, 105, 124, 126, 129, 135, 136, 149.

PSALMS OF PRAISE AND ADORATION, DISPLAYING THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

I. General acknowledgments of GOD's *Goodness* and *Mercy*, and particularly his care and protection of good men. *Psalm* 23, 34, 36, 91, 100, 103, 107, 117, 121, 145, 146.

II. *Psalms* displaying the *Power*, *Majesty*, *Glory*, and other attributes of the Divine Being. *Psalm* 8, 19, 24, 29, 33, 47, 50, 65, 66, 76, 77, 93, 95, 96, 97, 99, 104, 111, 113, 114, 115, 134, 139, 147, 148, 150.

INSTRUCTIVE PSALMS.

I. The different characters of good and bad men: The happiness of the one, and the miseries of the other, are represented in the following *Psalms*, 1, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 24, 25, 32, 34, 36, 37, 50, 52, 53, 58, 73, 75, 84, 91, 92, 94, 112, 119, 121, 125, 127, 128, 133.

II. The Excellence of GOD's Law. *Psalm* 19, 119.

III. The Vanity of human Life. *Psalm* 39, 49, 90.

IV. Advice to Magistrates. *Psalm* 82, 101.

V. The Virtue of Humility. *Psalm* 131.

PSALMS MORE EMINENTLY AND DIRECTLY PROPHETICAL.

Psalm 2, 16, 22, 40, 45, 68, 72, 87, 110, 118.

HISTORICAL PSALMS.

Psalm 78, 105, 106.

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A COMMENTARY

ON THE

BOOK OF PSALMS.

FIRST DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM I.

ARGUMENT.

THIS Psalm, which is generally looked upon by expositors as a preface or introduction to the rest, describes the blessedness of the righteous, consisting, ver. 1, negatively in their abstaining from sin; 2, positively, in holy meditation on the Scriptures, productive of continual growth in grace, which, 3, is beautifully represented under an image borrowed from vegetation; as, 4, is the opposite state of the unbelieving and ungodly, by a comparison taken from the threshing-floor. The last two verses foretell the final issue of things, with respect to both good and bad men, at the great day.

VER. 1. *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.*

The Psalter, like the Sermon on the mount, openeth with a "beatitude," for our comfort and encouragement, directing us immediately to that happiness which all mankind, in different ways, are seeking and inquiring after. All would secure themselves from the incursions of misery; but all do not consider that misery is the offspring of sin, from which it is therefore necessary to be delivered and preserved, in order to become happy, or "blessed." The variety of expressions here used by David, intimateth to us, that there is a gradation in wickedness; and that he who would not persist in evil courses, or commence a scoffer at the mystery of godliness, must have no fellowship with bad men; since it is impossible for any one, who forsakes the right path, to say, whither he shall wander; and few, when they begin to "walk in the counsel of the ungodly," propose finally to sit down in the "seat of the scornful." O thou second Adam, who alone, since the transgression of the first, has attained a sinless perfection, make thy servants "blessed," by making them "righteous," through thy merits and grace!

2. *But his delight is in the law of the* LORD; *and in his law doth he meditate day and night.*

He who hath once brought himself to "delight" in the Scriptures, will find no temptation to exchange that pleasure for any which the world or the flesh can offer him. Such an one will make the lively oracles of God his companions by day and by night. He will have recourse to them for direction, in the bright and cheerful hours of prosperity; to them he will apply for comfort, in the dark and dreary seasons of adversity. The enemy, when advancing to the assault, will always find him well employed, and will be received with—"Get thee behind me, Satan!" When the law of God is the object of our studies and meditations, we are conformed to the example of our Redeemer himself, who, as a man, while he "increased in stature," increased likewise "in wisdom," and grew powerful in the knowledge of the law which he was to fulfil, and of those prophecies which he was to accomplish; so that, at twelve years of age, he appeared to "have more understanding than all his teachers; for the divine testimonies had been his meditation." Ps. cxix. 99.

3. *And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.*

By continual meditation in the sacred

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writings, a man as naturally improves and advances in holiness, as a "tree" thrives and flourishes in a kindly and well-watered soil. All the "fruits" of righteousness shall show themselves at their proper "season," as opportunity calls for them; and his words, which are to his actions what the "leaves" are to the fruit, fall not to the ground, but are profitable, as well as ornamental. Every thing in him and about him serves the purpose for which it was intended; his brethren are benefited by him, and his Maker is glorified. How eminently is this the case with that TREE OF LIFE, which Jehovah planted in the midst of his new paradise, by the waters of comfort; a tree which sprung out of the earth, but its height reached to heaven, and its breadth to the ends of the world; its shadow is for the protection, its fruit for the support, and its leaves for the healing of the nations. It flourishes in immortal youth, and blooms for ever in unfading beauty. See Rev. xxii. 2.

4. *The ungodly* are *not so, but* are *like the chaff; which the wind driveth away.*

In the foregoing description of the righteous, all appeared verdant and fruitful, lovely and endearing; but here by way of contrast, we are presented with nothing but what is withered and worthless, without form or stability, blown about by every wind, and at length finally dispersed from the face of the earth, by the breath of God's displeasure, and driven into the fire prepared for it. Such is the state, such the lot of the "ungodly;" and so justly are they compared to "chaff."

5. *Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.*

A day is coming when the divine Husbandman shall appear with his "fan in his hand," and shall "thoroughly purge his floor." The wheat, which shall stand the winnowing of that day, will be gathered into the celestial granary; while the chaff, for ever separated from it, shall be hurried out of the floor, and carried, by a mighty whirlwind, to its own place. Then shall there be a "congregation of the righteous," in which "sinners shall not stand." At present wheat and chaff lie in one floor; wheat and tares grow in one field; good and bad fishes are comprehended in one net; good and bad men are contained in the visible church. Let us wait with patience God's time of separation.

6. *For the* LORD *knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.*

In the present scene of confusion, we may be, and often are, deceived in the judgment we form of men. But it cannot be so with the Omniscient. "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his:" 2 Tim. ii. 19. Their good deeds are not unobserved, nor will they be forgotten by him. His eye seeth them in secret, and his hand will reward them openly, in the day of final retribution; when crowns of glory shall sparkle on the heads of the righteous, but shame and torment shall be the portion of the wicked; "the way of the ungodly shall perish."

PSALM II.

ARGUMENT.

DAVID, seated upon the throne of Israel, notwithstanding the opposition made against him, and now about to carry his victorious arms amongst the neighboring heathen nations, may be supposed to have penned this, as a kind of inauguration Psalm. But that a "greater than David is here," appears not only from the strength of the expressions, which are more properly applicable to Messiah, than to David himself; but also from the citations made in the New Testament; the appointment of the Psalm by the church to be read on Easter day; and the confessions of the Jewish rabbies. It treats therefore, 1—3, of the opposition raised, both by Jew and Gentile, against the kingdom of Jesus Christ; 4—6, of his victory, and the confusion of his enemies; 7—9, after his resurrection, he preaches the Gospel; and, 10—12, calls the kings of the earth to accept it; denouncing vengeance against those who shall not do so, and pronouncing a blessing on those who shall.

1. *Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? 2. The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the* LORD, *and against his Anointed,* saying,

The true David is introduced, like his ancestor of old, expostulating with the nations, for their vain attempts to frustrate the divine decree in his favor. These two verses are cited, Acts, iv. 27, and thus expounded:—"Lord—of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." Persecution may be carried on by the people, but it is raised and fomented by kings and rulers. After the ascension of Christ, and the effusion of the Spirit, the whole power of the Roman empire was employed in the same cause, by those who, from time to time, swayed the

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sceptre of the world. But still, they who intended to extirpate the faith, and destroy the church, how many and how mighty soever they might be, were found only to "imagine a vain thing." And equally vain will every imagination be, that exalteth itself against the counsels of God for the salvation of his people.

3. *Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.*

These words, supposed to be spoken by the powers in arms against Messiah, discover to us the true ground of opposition, namely, the unwillingness of rebellious nature to submit to the obligations of divine laws, which cross the interests, and lay a restraint upon the desires of men. Corrupt affections are the most inveterate enemies of Christ; and their language is, "We will not have this man to reign over us." Doctrines would be readily believed, if they involved in them no precepts; and the church may be tolerated by the world, if she will only give up her discipline.

4. *He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the* LORD *shall have them in derision.*

By these and such like expressions, which frequently occur in the Scripture, we are taught, in a language which we understand, because borrowed from ourselves, and our manner of showing contempt, how the schemes of worldly politicians appear to him, who, sitting upon his heavenly throne, surveys at a glance whatever men are doing, or contriving to do, upon the earth. This is the idea intended to be conveyed; and from it we are to separate all notions of levity, or whatever else may offend when applied to the Godhead, though adhering to the phrases as in use among the sons of Adam. The same is to be said with regard to words which seem to attribute many other human passions and affections to the Deity: as, for instance, these which follow:—

5. *Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.*
6. *Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion.*

The meaning is, that by pouring out his indignation upon the adversaries of Messiah, as formerly upon those of David, God would no less evidently convict and reprove their folly and impiety, than if he had actually thus spoken to them from his eternal throne above: "Yet, notwithstanding all your rage against him, have I raised from the dead, and exalted as the Head of the church, my appointed King Messiah; in like manner as I once set his victorious representative David upon my holy hill of Sion, in the earthly Jerusalem, out of the reach of his numerous and implacable enemies." Let us reflect, for our comfort, that He who raised up his Son Jesus, has promised to raise up us also who believe in him; and that the world can no more prevent the exaltation of the members, than it could prevent that of the Head.

7. *I will declare the decree: the* LORD *hath said unto me, Thou* art *my son; this day have I begotten thee.*

Jesus, for the suffering of death, crowned with honor and immortality, upon the holy hill of Zion, in the new Jerusalem, now "declares the decree," or preaches the Gospel of the everlasting covenant. His part in the covenant was performed by keeping the law, and dying for the sins of men. Nothing therefore remained, but the accomplishment of the promise made to him by the Father, upon those conditions. One part of this promise was fulfilled, saith St. Paul, "in that he had raised up Jesus again; as it is written in the second Psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." Acts, xiii. 33. Another part was fulfilled at the ascension of Christ, and his inauguration to an eternal kingdom, and an unchangeable priesthood, as the true Melchizedek, King of righteousness, King of peace, and Priest of the most high God. The next article in the covenant, on the Father's side, was the enlargement of Messiah's spiritual kingdom, by the accession of the nations to the church. And accordingly, this was the next thing which "Jehovah said unto him," after having proclaimed his Sonship and pre-eminence; as we find by the following verse:

8. *Ask of me, and I shall give* thee *the heathen* for *thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth* for *thy possession.*

Christ was to enter upon the exercise of the intercessorial branch of his priestly office with a request of the Father, that the "heathen world might be given for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession," in return for the labors he had undergone, and the pains he had endured; as also to supply the place of the Jews, who were his original "inheritance and possession," but were cast off, because of unbelief. That such request was made by Christ, and granted by the Father, the person who writes this, and he who reads it, in a once Pagan, but now Christian island, are both witnesses.

9. *Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.*

The irresistible power and inflexible justice of Christ's kingdom are signified by his "ruling with a rod of iron:" the impotence of those who presume to oppose him, is com-

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pared to that of "a potter's vessel," which must fly in pieces at the first stroke of the iron rod. The power of Christ will be manifested in all, by the destruction either of sin, or the sinner. The hearts which now yield to the impresions of his Spirit, are broken only in order to be formed anew, and to become vessels of honor, fitted for the Master's use. Those which continue stubborn and hardened, must be dashed to pieces by the stroke of eternal vengeance.

10. *Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.* 11. *Serve the* LORD *with fear, and rejoice with trembling.*

The decree of the Father, concerning the kingdom of the Son, being thus promulgated by the latter, an exhortation is made to the kings of the earth, that they would learn true wisdom, and suffer themselves to be instructed unto salvation; that they would bow their sceptres to the cross of Jesus, and cast their crowns before his throne; esteeming it a far greater honor, as well as a more exalted pleasure, to serve Him, than to find themselves at the head of victorious armies, surrounded by applauding nations.

12. *Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish* from *the way; when his wrath is kindled but a little, blessed* are *all they that put their trust in him.*

Christ beseeches kings, no less than their subjects, to be reconciled to him, and by him to the Father: since a day is at hand, when mighty men shall have no distinction, but that of being mightily tormented. And then will be seen the "blessedness" of those who "put their trust in" the Lord Jesus. For when the glory of man shall fade away as the short-lived flower of the field, and when all that is called great and honorable in princes, shall be laid low in the dust, he shall give unto his faithful servants a crown without cares, and a kingdom which cannot be moved.

PSALM III.

ARGUMENT.

THIS Psalm is said to have been composed by David, when he fled from his son Absalom. Thus circumstanced, he expresses himself in terms well adapted to the parallel case of the Son of David, persecuted by rebellious Israel; as also to that of his church, suffering tribulation in the world. 1, 2, He complains, in much anguish, of the multitude of his enemies, and of the reproaches cast upon him, as one forsaken by God; but, 3, declares, notwithstanding, his sure trust in the divine promises; 4, 5, he relates the success of his prayers, 6—8, derides the impotent malice of his enemies, and ascribes salvation to Jehovah.

1. LORD, *how are they increased that trouble me! Many* are *they that rise up against me.*

David is astonished to find, that "the hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom," 2 Sam. xv. 13, that his counsellors are revolted, and his friends falling off continually; and that the king of Israel is forced to leave his capital mourning and weeping. Thus, led forth out of Jerusalem by his own children in arms against him, the holy Jesus went, forsaken and sorrowing, to the cross, in the day of trouble. Thus is the church oftentimes opposed and betrayed by her sons, and the Christian by his passions and affections. So true it is, that "a man's foes are they of his own household." But he who by prayer engages the assistance of Jehovah, will rise superior to them all.

2. *Many* there be *which say of my soul,* there is *no help for him in* GOD.

Affliction and desertion are two very different things, but often confounded by the world. Shimei reviled David, as reprobated by heaven; and the language of the Shimeis afterward, concerning the Son of David, was, "He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him." See 2 Sam. xvi. 8. Matt. xxvii. 43. The fearful imaginations of our own desponding hearts, and the suggestions of our crafty adversary, frequently join to help forward this most dangerous temptation, in the hour of sorrow. What therefore hath faith to offer? We shall hear—

3. *But thou, O* LORD, art *a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of my head.*

Such is the answer of David, and of all the saints, but above all, of the King of saints, to the temptation before mentioned. Jehovah is a "shield" against this, and all other fiery darts, shot by Satan and his associates: he is the "glory", of Christ and the church, with which they will one day be seen invested, though for a season it appear not to the world, any more than did the royalty of David, when, weeping and barefoot, he went up Mount Olivet · 2 Sam. xv. 30. The same Jehovah is "the lifter up of our heads," by the gift of holy confidence, and the hope of a resurrection, through that of Jesus Christ, prefigured by the triumphant and happy return of David to Jerusalem.

4. *I cried unto the* LORD *with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill.*

David, driven from Jerusalem, still looked and prayed towards the "holy hill" of Sion.

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Christ, when a stranger on the earth, "made supplication with strong crying," to his Father in heaven. Christ was heard for his own sake; David was heard, and we shall be heard, through him.

5. *I laid me down and slept; I awaked, for the* LORD *sustained me.*

Behold David, in the midst of danger, sleeping without fear; secure, through the divine protection, of awaking to engage and vanquish his enemies. Behold the Son of David composing himself to his rest upon the cross, that bed of sorrows; and commending his spirit into the Father's hands, in full confidence of a joyful resurrection, according to the promise, at the time appointed. Behold this, O Christian, and let faith teach thee how to sleep, and how to die; while it assures thee, that as sleep is a short death, so death is only a longer sleep; and that the same God watches over thee, in thy bed and in thy grave.

6. *I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set* themselves *against me round about.*

Faith, revived and invigorated by prayer, and fixed on God alone, is a stranger to fear, in the worst of times. The innumerable examples of saints, rescued from tribulation, and, above all, the resurrection of the Son of God from the dead, render the believer bold as a lion, although the name of his adversary be "legion."

7. *Arise, O* LORD! *save me, O my* GOD! *for thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek-bone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.*

The church, through Christ, prayeth in these words of David, that Jehovah would arise, as of old time, in the power of his might; that he would finally break the power of Satan and his adherents; pluck the spoil out of the jaws of those beasts of prey; and work that glorious deliverance for the members, which is already wrought for the Head of the body mystical.

8. *Salvation* belongeth, or, *be ascribed unto the* LORD; *thy blessing* is, or, *be upon thy people.*

The Psalm ends with an acknowledgment, which ought always to fill the heart, and, upon every proper occasion, to flow from the mouth of a Christian; namely, that "salvation" is not to be had from man, from the kings of the earth, or the gods of the heathen, from saints or angels, but from Jehovah alone; to whom alone, therefore, the glory shall be ascribed. If He will save, none can destroy; if He will destroy, none can save. Let Balak, then, curse Israel, or hire Balaam to curse them for him; be but "thy blessing," O Lord, upon thy people, and it sufficeth.

PSALM IV.

ARGUMENT.

THE person speaking in this Psalm, 1, prayeth to be heard by God; 2, convinceth the world of sin; 3, declareth the righteous to be under the divine protection; 4, 5, prescribeth solitude and meditation, as the proper means to lead men to repentance and faith; 6, showeth that in God alone peace and comfort are to be found, and, 7, how superior the joys of the spirit are to those of sense; 8, reposeth himself, in full assurance of faith, on the loving kindness of the Lord.

1: *Hear me when I call, O* GOD *of my righteousness; thou hast enlarged me* when I was in *distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.*

The church, like David, "calls" aloud, as one in great affliction, for God's assistance: she addresses him as the "God of her righteousness," as the fountain of pardon and grace; she reminds him of that spiritual liberty, and "enlargement" from bondage, which he had purchased for her, and oftentimes wrought in her: and, conscious of her demerits, makes her prayer for "mercy."

2. *O ye sons of men, how long* will ye turn *my glory into shame?* How long *will ye love vanity*, and *seek after leasing, or falsehood?*

If the Israelitish monarch conceived he had just cause to expostulate with his enemies, for despising the royal majesty with which Jehovah had invested his Anointed; of how much severer reproof shall they be thought worthy, who blaspheme the essential "glory" of King Messiah, which shines forth by his Gospel in the church! Thou, O Christ, art everlasting Truth; all is "vanity and falsehood," transient and fallacious, but the love of thee!

3. *But know that the* LORD *hath set apart him that is godly for himself; the* LORD *will hear when I call upon him.*

Be the opinions or the practices of men what they will, the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand. Is David "set apart" for the kingdom of Israel? Saul shall not be able to detain, or Absalom to wrest, it from him. Is Messiah ordained to be King of the Israel of God? Death and hell shall not prevent it. Are his disciples appointed to reign with him? Infallibly they shall. Our intercessor is already on high; and for his sake, "the Lord will hear us when we call upon him." What, then, can be said for us, if we neglect to call upon him?

4. *Stand in awe,* Heb. *tremble, and sin not; commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still.*

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The enemies of Christ, as well as those of David, are here called to repentance, and the process of conversion is described. The above mentioned consideration of the divine counsel, and the certainty of its being carried into execution, by the salvation of the righteous, and the confusion of their enemies, makes the wicked "tremble." "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom:" it arrests the sinner in his course, and he "sins not;" he goes no farther in the way of sin, but stops, and reflects upon what he has been doing: he "communes with his own heart upon his bed, and is still;" his conscience suffers him not to rest in the night, but takes the advantage of solitude and silence, to set before him his transgressions, with all the terrors of death and judgment; stirring him up to confess the former, and deprecate the latter, with unfeigned compunction and sorrow of heart; to turn unto the Lord, and do works meet for repentance; to learn to do good, as well as to cease from doing evil.

5. *Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the* LORD.

The Jews are no longer to offer the shadowy sacrifices of their law, since He, who is the substance of them all, is come into the world. The Gentiles are no more to offer their idolatrous sacrifices, since their idols have fallen before the cross. But returning sinners, whether Jews or Gentiles, are to offer the same "sacrifices of" evangelical "righteousness," not "putting their trust" in them but "in the Lord" Jesus, through whose Spirit they are enabled to offer, and through whose blood their offerings are acceptable unto God. Faith, hope, and charity mutually strengthen each other, and compose "a threefold cord," which is not easily broken.

6. There be *many that say, Who will show us* any *good?* LORD, *lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us!*

The two former verses were addressed to rebellious sinners, inviting them to repentance and reformation. This seems to relate to the righteous, who, in times of calamity and persecution, like the friends of distressed David, are tempted to despond, on seeing no end of their troubles. The Psalmist therefore prescribes prayer to all such, as an antidote against the temptation; he directs them, in the darkest night, to look towards heaven, nor doubt the return of day, when the rising sun shall diffuse light and salvation, and sorrow and sighing shall fly away. How many are continually asking the question in this verse! How few applying to Him, who alone can give an answer of peace and comfort!

7. *Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time* that *their corn and their wine increased.*

No sooner is the prayer preferred, but the answer is given; and the devout soul declares herself to experience a joy in the midst of tribulation, far superior to the joy with which men rejoice in the time of harvest, or that of vintage; a joy, bright and pure, as the regions from whence it descends. Such is the difference between the bread of earth, and that of heaven; between the juice of the grape, and the cup of salvation. Teach us, O Lord, to discern this difference, and to choose aright.

8. *I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep; for thou,* LORD, *only makest me dwell in safety.*

This conclusion affords ample matter for profitable and delightful meditation, if it be considered, first, as spoken by David, or any other believer, when lying down to rest, full of the joys of a good conscience, and faith unfeigned; secondly, as pronounced by the true David, when composing himself to his rest, in certain hope of a resurrection. And happy the Christian, who having nightly, with this verse, committed himself to his bed, as to his grave, shall at last, with the same words, resign himself to his grave, as to his bed, from which he expects in due time to arise, and sing a morning hymn, with the children of the resurrection.

PSALM V.

ARGUMENT.

THE Psalmist, in affliction, 1—3, continues and resolves to continue instant in prayer; 4—6, declares the irreconcilable hatred which God bears to sin, and, 7, his own confidence of being accepted; 8, he petitions for grace to direct and preserve him in the way; 9, sets forth the wickedness of his enemies; 10, foretells their punishment, and, 11, 12, the salvation of the faithful.

1. *Give ear to my words, O* LORD, *consider my meditation,* or, *my dove-like mournings.*

Although nothing can really hinder or divert the divine attention, yet God is represented as "not hearing," when either the person is unacceptable, or the petition improper, or when he would thoroughly prove the faith and patience of the petitioner. Christ, the church, and the believing soul, are all in Scripture styled "doves," from their possessing the amiable properties of that bird of meekness and innocence, purity and love. The "mournings" of such are always heard and attended to in heaven.

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2. *Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto thee will I pray.*

The voice of the suppliant's cry will be in proportion to the sense which he hath of his sin. Whom should a subject solicit, but his King? to whom should a sinner pray, but to his God? Let us often think upon the strong cryings of him who suffered for the sins of the world, and upon that intercession by which the pardon of those sins was procured.

3. *My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O* LORD; *in the morning will I direct* my prayer, Heb. *dispose*, or *set myself in order, unto*, or *for thee, and will look up.*

He who is good in earnest, and hath his heart fully bent upon the work of salvation, like other skilful and diligent artificers, will be "early" in his application to it; he will get the start of the world, and take the advantage of the "sweet hour of prime," to "dispose," and "set himself in order," for the day. What is a slothful sinner to think of himself, when he reads, concerning the holy Jesus, that "in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed!" Mark i. 35.

4. *For thou* art *not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness; neither shall evil dwell with thee.*

The Psalmist was encouraged to make his early prayers to God in the day of trouble, upon this consideration, that his righteous cause must finally prosper, and the divine counsels be accomplished in his exaltation, and the depression of his enemies, who were likewise the enemies of God. The same was the case and the confidence of a suffering Messiah; and such is that of his church and people in the world, where "wickedness" may prosper, and "evil" not only live, but reign. Nevertheless, we know that "God hath no pleasure" in them, nor shall they "dwell with him," as we hope to do.

5. *The foolish*, Heb. *mad, shall not stand in thy sight; for thou hatest all workers of iniquity.* 6. *Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing*, or *falsehood; the* LORD *doth abhor the bloodthirsty and deceitful man.*

No objects of the senses can be so nauseous to them, as the various kinds of sin are in the sight of God. O could we but think, as he does, concerning these, we should rather choose "madness" than transgression, and as soon fall in love with a plague-sore, as a temptation. "Falsehood, blood-thirstiness, and deceitfulness," are marked out as characteristical of the enemies of David, of Christ, and the church; and history evinces them so to have been. Let us never go within the infection of such pestilential crimes.

7. *But as for me, I will come* into *thy house in the multitude of thy mercy:* and *in thy fear will I worship towards thy holy temple.*

Wisdom, righteousness, truth, mercy, and sincerity, form a character the reverse of that drawn in the preceding verses, and such an one as God will accept, when appearing before him in his house, and offering, with humility and reverence, the sacrifices of the new law, as David did those of the old, through faith in Him who alone filled up the character, and procured acceptance for believers, and their oblations.

8. *Lead me, O* LORD, *in thy righteousness, because of mine enemies; make thy way straight before my face.*

The child of God, admitted into his holy temple, there prefers this petition, praying to be led by the divine Spirit in a course of holy obedience, all impediments being removed out of the way, which otherwise might obstruct the progress, or cause the fall of one beginning to walk in the path of life; of one who had many "enemies" ready to contrive, to take advantage of, to rejoice and triumph in his ruin. Thus a man's enemies, while they oblige him to pray more fervently, and to watch more narrowly over his conduct, oftentimes become his best friends.

9. *For* there *is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue.*

A part of this verse is cited, Rom. iii. 13, together with several other passages from the Psalms and Prophets, to evince the depravity of mankind, whether Jews or Gentiles, till justified by faith, and renewed by grace. It is plain, therefore, that the description was designed for others, besides the enemies of the literal David, and is of more general import, reaching to the world of the ungodly, and to the enemies of all righteousness, as manifested in the person of Messiah, and in his church. The charge brought against these is, that "truth" and "fidelity" were not to be found in their dealings with God or each other; that their "inward parts" were very wickedness; their first thoughts and imaginations were defiled, and the stream was poisoned at the fountain; that their "throat was an open sepulchre," continually emitting, in obscene and impious language, the noisome and infectious exhalations of a putrid heart, entombed in a body of sin; and that, if ever they put on the appearance of goodness, they "flattered with their tongue," in order the more effectually to deceive and destroy. So low is human nature fallen! "O thou Adam, what hast thou done! For

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though it was thou that sinned, thou art not fallen alone, but we all that come of thee." 2 Esd. vii. 48.

10. *Destroy thou them, O* GOD; *let them fall by their own counsels: cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions, for they have rebelled against thee.*

Concerning passages of this imprecatory kind in the book of Psalms, it is to be observed, that they are not spoken of private and personal enemies, but of the opposers of God and his Anointed; nor of any among these, but the irreclaimable and finally impenitent; and this, by way of prediction, rather than imprecation; which would appear, if the original verbs were translated uniformly in the future tense, as they might be, and indeed, to cut off all occasion from them which desire it, should be translated. The verse before us would then run thus:—"Thou wilt destroy them, O God; they shall perish by their own counsels: thou wilt cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions, for they have rebelled against thee." The words, when rendered in this form, contain a prophecy of the infatuation, rejection, and destruction of such as should obstinately persevere in their opposition to the counsels of heaven, whether relating to David, to Christ, or to the church. The fate of Ahitophel and Absalom, of Judas and the Jews, should warn others not to offend after the same example.

11. *But let all those that trust in thee rejoice; let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee.* Heb. *All they that trust in thee* shall *rejoice, &c.*

As the last verse foretold the perdition of the ungodly, this describes the felicity of the saints; who, trusting in God, rejoice evermore, and sing aloud in the church the praises of their Saviour and mighty defender; the love of whose name fills their hearts with joy unspeakable, while they experience the comforts of grace, and expect the rewards of glory.

12. *For thou,* LORD, *wilt bless the righteous; with favor wilt thou compass him as* with *a shield.*

The "blessing" of God descends upon us through Jesus Christ "the righteous," or "just one," as of old it did upon Israel through David, whom, for the benefit of his chosen, God protected, delivered, and placed upon the throne. Thou, O Christ, art the righteous Saviour, thou art the King of Israel, thou art the blessed of Jehovah, the fountain of blessing to all believers, and thy "favor" is the defence and protection of the church militant.

FIRST DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM VI.

ARGUMENT.

THIS is the first of those Psalms which are styled penitential. It contains, 1, deprecation of eternal vengeance, and, 2, 3, a petition for pardon; which is enforced from the consideration of the penitent's sufferings; 4, from that of the divine mercy; 5, from that of the praise and glory which God would fail to receive, if man were destroyed; 6, 7, from that of the penitent's humiliation and contrition; 8—10, the strain changes into one of joy and triumph, upon the success and return of the prayer.

1. *O* LORD, *rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.*

Let us suppose a sinner awakened to a true sense of his condition, and looking around him for help. Above is an angry God preparing to take vengeance; beneath, the fiery gulf ready to receive him; without him, a world in flames; within, the gnawing worm. Thus situated, he begins, in extreme agony of spirit, "O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure." He expects that God will "rebuke" him, but only prays that it may not be in "anger," finally to destroy him; he desires to be chastened, but chastened in fatherly love, not in the "hot displeasure" of an inexorable judge. As often as we are led thus to express our sense of sin, and dread of punishment, let us reflect on Him, whose righteous soul, endued with a sensibility peculiar to itself, sustained the sins of the world, and the displeasure of the Father.

2. *Have mercy upon me, O* LORD, *for I* am *weak; O* LORD, *heal me; for my bones are vexed,* Heb. *shaken,* or, *made to tremble.*

The penitent entreats for mercy, first, by representing his pitiable case, under the image of sickness. He describes his soul as deprived of all its health and vigor, as languishing and fainting, by reason of sin, which had eat out the vitals, and shaken all the powers and supporters of the spiritual frame, so that the breath of life seemed to be departing. Enough, however, was left, to supplicate the healing aid of the God of mercy and comfort; to petition for oil and wine at the hands of the Physician of spirits. How happy is it for us, that we have a physician, who cannot but be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, seeing that he himself once took them upon him, and suffered for them, even unto the death of the cross, under which he

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"fainted," and on which "his bones were vexed."

3. *My soul is also sore vexed: but thou, O* LORD, *how long?*

Another argument is drawn from the sense which the penitent hath of this his woful condition, and the consternation and anxiety produced thereby in his troubled mind. These cause him to fly for refuge to the hope set before him. "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick;" he is therefore beautifully represented as crying out, with a fond and longing impatience, "But thou, O LORD, how long?" His strength is supposed to fail him, and the sentence is left imperfect. What, blessed Jesus, were thy "troubles," when to thy companions thou saidst, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death?" By those thy sorrows we beseech thee to hear the voice of thine afflicted church, crying to thee from the earth, "My soul is also sore troubled; but thou, O LORD, how long?"

4. *Return, O* LORD, *deliver my soul; Oh, save me for thy mercies' sake.*

A third argument is formed upon the consideration of God's "mercy;" for the sake of which, as it is promised to penitents, he is requested to "return," or to turn himself towards the suppliant; to lift up his countenance on the desponding heart; to "deliver it from darkness and the shadow of death, and to diffuse around it light and life, salvation, joy, and gladness, like the sun in the morning, when he revisits a benighted world, and calls up the creation to bless the Maker of so glorious a luminary, so bright a representative of redeeming love.

5. *For in death* there is *no remembrance of thee; in the grave who shall give thee thanks?*

The fourth argument proceeds upon a supposition, that God created man for his own glory, which, therefore, would be so far diminished, if man were permitted finally to perish. The body could not glorify God, unless raised from the dead; nor could the soul, if left in hell. The voice of thanksgiving is not heard in the grave, and no hallelujahs are sung in the pit of destruction. This plea, now urged by the church, was urged for her without all doubt by her Saviour in his devotions, and prevailed in his mouth, as, through him, it will do in hers.

6. *I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears.*

The penitent is supplied with a fifth argument, by the signs and fruits of a sincere repentance, which put forth themselves in him. Such was his sorrow, and such revenge did he take upon himself, that for every idle word he now poured forth a groan, like him that is in anguish through extremity of bodily pain, until he was "weary," but yet continued groaning; while the sad remembrance of each wanton folly drew a tear from the fountains of grief. The all-righteous Saviour himself wept over sinners; sinners read the story, and yet return again to their sins!

7. *Mine eye is consumed because of grief: it waxeth old because of all mine enemies.*

Grief exhausts the animal spirits, dims the eyes, and brings on old age before its time. Thus it is said, concerning the man of sorrows, that "many were astonished at him, his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men:" Isa. lii. 14. How long, in these times, might youth and beauty last, were godly sorrow their only enemy!

8. *Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity, for the* LORD *hath heard the voice of my weeping.* 9. *The* LORD *hath heard my supplication; the* LORD *will hear, or hath heard my prayer.*

Repentance, having performed her task, having taught her votary to forsake sin, and to renounce all communication with sinners, now gives place to faith, which appears with the glad tidings of pardon and acceptance, causing the penitent to rejoice in God his Saviour, with joy unspeakable; and inspiring his heart with vigor and resolution to run his course in the way of righteousness. Risen to newness of life, he defies the malice, and predicts the final overthrow of his spiritual adversaries.

10. *Let all mine enemies,* or, *all mine enemies shall be ashamed, and sore vexed; let them,* or, *they shall return,* and *be ashamed suddenly.*

Many of the mournful Psalms end in this manner, to instruct the believer, that he is continually to look forward, and solace himself with beholding that day, when his warfare shall be accomplished; when sin and sorrow shall be no more; when sudden and everlasting confusion shall cover the enemies of righteousness; when the sackcloth of the penitent shall be exchanged for a robe of glory, and every tear become a sparkling gem in his crown; when to sighs and groans shall succeed the songs of heaven, set to angelic harps, and faith shall be resolved into the vision of the Almighty.

PSALM VII.

ARGUMENT.

DAVID is said to have composed this Psalm concerning the words, or the matter of Cush the Benjamite. Whether Saul, or Shimei, or any one else, be intended under

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this name, it is sufficiently clear, that David had been maliciously aspersed and calumniated by such a person; that the Psalm was written to vindicate himself from the imputation, whatever was the nature of it; and, consequently, may be considered as the appeal of the true David and his disciples, against the grand Accuser and his associates. The person speaking, 1, 2, declares his trust to be in God; 3—5, protests his innocence; 6—8, desires that judgment may be given in the cause; 9, 10, prays for the abolition of sin, and the full establishment of righteousness; 11—13, sets forth the divine judgment against sinners; 14—16, describes the beginning, progress, and end of sin, with, 17, the joy and triumph of the faithful.

1. *O* LORD *my God, in thee do I put my trust; save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me:*

To a tender and ingenuous spirit, the "persecution" of the tongue is worse than that of the sword, and with more difficulty submitted to; as indeed a good name is more precious than bodily life. Believers in every age have been persecuted in this way; and the King of saints often mentions it as one of the bitterest ingredients in his cup of sorrows. Faith and prayer are the arms with which this formidable temptation must be encountered, and may be overcome. The former assures us, that God can "save and deliver" us from it; the latter induces him so to do.

2. *Lest he tear my soul like a lion, rending* it *in pieces, while* there is *none to deliver.*

The "lion" of whom David stood in fear was probably Saul, roused, by a false accusation, to destroy him. The rage of tyrants is often in the same manner excited against the church. And we all have reason to dread the fury of one who is "the roaring lion," as well as the "accuser of the brethren." From him none can deliver us, but God only.

3. *O* LORD *my God, if I have done this; if there be iniquity in my hands;*

David makes a solemn appeal to God, the searcher of hearts, as judge of his innocence, with regard to the particular crime laid to his charge. Any person, when slandered, may do the same. But Christ only could call upon Heaven to attest his universal uprightness. In his "hands" there was "no iniquity;" all his works were wrought in perfect righteousness; and when the prince of this world came to try and explore him, he found nothing whereof justly to accuse him. The vessel was thoroughly shaken, but the liquor in it continued pure.

4. *If I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me; yea, I have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy:*

David probably alludes to the life of Saul, which was twice preserved by him, when he had been pressed by his attendants to embrace the opportunity of taking it away. See 1 Sam. xxiv. xxvi. Of the Son of David St. Paul says, "In this he commended his love to us, that when we were sinners, he died for us:" Rom. v. 8. In so exalted a sense did he deliver him that without cause was his enemy." Wretched they who persecute their benefactor: happy he who can reflect, that he has been a benefactor to his persecutors.

5. *Let the enemy persecute my soul, and take* it; *yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth, and lay mine honor in the dust.*

These are the evils which David imprecates on himself, if he were such as his adversaries represented him: persecution, apprehension, death, and disgrace. Christ, for our sakes submitting to the imputation of guilt, suffered all these: but, being innocent in himself, he triumphed over them all; he was raised and released, glorified and adored; he pursued and overtook his enemies, he conquered the conquerors, and trampled them under his feet; and he enableth us, through grace, to do the same.

6. *Arise, O* LORD, *in thine anger, lift up thyself because of the rage of mine enemies: and awake for me* to *the judgment* that *thou hast commanded.*

To a protestation of innocence succeeds a prayer for judgment upon the case, which is formed on these two considerations; first, the unreasonable and unrelenting fury of the persecutors; secondly, the justice which God has "commanded" others to execute, and which therefore he himself will doubtless execute upon such occasions. How did he "awake," and "arise," and "lift up himself to judgment" on the behalf of his Anointed, in the day of the resurrection of Jesus, and the subsequent confusion of his enemies! And let injured innocence ever comfort itself with the remembrance of another day to come, when every earth-born cloud being removed, it shall dazzle its oppressors with a lustre far superior to that of the noon-day sun.

7. *So shall the congregation of the people compass thee about: for their sakes, therefore, return thou on high.*

The meaning is, that a visible display of God's righteous judgment would induce multitudes who should behold, or hear of it, to adore and glorify him. For their sakes, therefore, as well as that of the sufferer, he is entreated to re-ascend the tribunal as formerly, and pronounce the wished-for sentence. Thus the determination of the cause

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between Jesus and his adversaries, by his resurrection, and "return on high," brought "the congregation of the nations" around him, and effected the conversion of the world. Nor, in human affairs, does anything more advance the reputation of a people among their neighbors, than an equitable sentence in the mouth of him who sitteth in judgment.

8. *The* LORD *shall judge the people: judge me, O* LORD, *according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity* that is *in me.*

Conscious of his "righteousness" and "integrity," as to the matter in question, David desires to be judged by him who is to judge the world at the last day. How few, among Christians, have seriously and deliberately considered, whether the sentence of that day is likely to be in their favor! Yet, how many, with the utmost composure and self-complacency, repeat continually the words of this Psalm, as well as those in the *Te Deum*, "We believe that thou shalt come to be our judge!" Legal, or perfect righteousness and integrity are peculiar to the Redeemer; but evangelical righteousness and integrity all must have, who would be saved.

9. *Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish the just:* or, *the wickedness of the wicked shall*, &c.; *for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins.* 10. *My defence is of God, who saveth the upright in heart.*

It is predicted, that wickedness will, in the end, be abolished, and the just immoveably established, by Him who knoweth intimately the very thoughts and desires of both good and bad men, and will give to each their due reward. How can we doubt of this, when it has pleased God to afford so many examples and preludes to it, in his dispensations of old time? The righteous cause hath already triumphed in Christ; let us not doubt but that it will do so in the church. Happy the man whose hope is therefore in God, because "he saveth the upright in heart."

11. *God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry* with the wicked *every day.*

The sense seems to be, that there are daily instances in the world of God's favor towards his people; as also of his displeasure against the ungodly, who are frequently visited by sore judgments, and taken away in their sins. In this light we should consider and regard all history, whether that of our own age and nation, or of any other.

12. *If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready.* 13. *He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors.*

The sinner who is not converted by the vengeance inflicted on others, will himself at length be made an example of. The wrath of God may be slow, but it is always sure. In thoughtless security man wantons and whiles away the precious hours; he knows not that every transgression sets a fresh edge on the sword, which is thus continually whetting for his destruction; nor considers that he is the mark of an archer who never errs, and who, at this very instant, perhaps, has fitted to the string that arrow which is to pierce his soul with everlasting anguish.

14. *Behold, he travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood.*

This is not to be understood as if "travail" were previous to "conception." The first is a general expression, "Behold, he travaileth with iniquity:" the latter part of the verse is more particular: as if it had been said, "and having conceived mischief, he bringeth forth falsehood." When an evil thought is instilled into the heart of a man, then the seed of the wicked one is sown; by admitting, retaining, and cherishing the diabolical suggestion in his mind, he "conceiveth" a purpose of "mischief;" when that purpose is gradually formed and matured for the birth, he "travaileth with iniquity;" at length, by carrying it into action, he "bringeth forth falsehood." The purity of the soul, like that of the body, from whence the image is borrowed, must be preserved by keeping out of the way of temptation.

15. *He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch* which *he made.* 16. *His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate.*

All the world agrees to acknowledge the equity of that sentence which inflicts upon the guilty the punishment intended by them for the innocent. No one pities the fate of a man buried in that pit which he had dug to receive his neighbor; or of him who owes his death-wound to the return of an arrow shot against heaven. Saul was overthrown by those Philistines whom he would have made the instruments of cutting off David. Haman was hanged on his own gallows. The Jews, who excited the Romans to crucify Christ, were themselves, by the Romans, crucified in crowds. Striking instances these of the vengeance to be one day executed on all tempters and persecutors of others; when men and angels shall lift up their voices, and cry out together, "Righteous art thou, O LORD, and just are thy judgments."

17. *I will praise the* LORD *according to his righteousness; and will sing praise to the name of the* LORD *most high.*

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Whatever doubts may at present arise concerning the ways of God, let us rest assured that they will all receive a solution; and that the "righteousness" of the great Judge, manifested in his final determinations, will be the subject of everlasting hallelujahs.

PSALM VIII.

ARGUMENT.

THIS is the first of those Psalms which the Church has appointed to be read on Ascension-day. It treats, as appears from Heb. ii. 6, &c. of the wonderful love of God, shown by the exaltation of our nature in Messiah, or the second Adam, to the right hand of the Majesty on high, and by the subjection of all creatures to the word of his power.

1. *O* LORD, *our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.*

The Prophet beholds in spirit the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow; like St. Stephen afterward, he sees heaven opened, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; the sight fills his heart with wonder, love, and devotion, which break forth in this address to "Jehovah," as "our Lord;" for such he is by the twofold right of creation and redemption, having made us, and purchased us. On both accounts, "how excellent," how full of beauty and honor is his name, diffused by the Gospel through "all the earth!" But more especially do men and angels admire and adore him for the exaltation of his "glory," the glory of the only begotten, high "above the heavens," and all created nature, to the throne prepared for him before the foundation of the world.

2. *Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained,* Heb. *founded,* or, *constituted strength, because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.*

This verse is cited by our Lord, Matt. xxi. 16, and applied to "little children in the temple, crying, Hosanna to the Son of David!" which vexed and confounded his malignant adversaries. The import of the words, therefore, plainly is, that the praises of Messiah, celebrated in the church by his children, have in them a strength and power which nothing can withstand; they can abash infidelity, when at its greatest height, and strike hell itself dumb. In the citation made by our Lord, which the Evangelist gives from the Greek of the LXX, we read, "thou hast perfected praise," which seems to be rather a paraphrase than a translation of the Hebrew, literally rendered by our translators, "thou hast ordained strength."

3. *When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained:* 4. *What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?*

At the time of inditing this Psalm, David is evidently supposed to have had before his eyes the heavens as they appear by night. He is struck with the awful magnificence of the wide extended firmament, adorned by the moon walking in brightness, and rendered brilliant by the vivid lustre of a multitude of shining orbs, differing from each other in magnitude and splendor. And when, from surveying the beauty of heaven, with its glorious show, he turns to take a view of the creature, man, he is still more affected by the mercy, than he had before been by the majesty of the Lord; since far less wonderful it is, that God should make such a world as this, than that He, who made such a world as this, should be "mindful of man," in his fallen estate, and should "visit" human nature with his salvation.

5. *For thou hast made him a little,* or, *for a little while, lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor.* 6. *Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands: thou hast put all* things *under his feet.*

On these two verses, with that preceding, St. Paul has left us the following comment: "One in a certain place TESTIFIED, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than [*marg.* a little while inferior to] the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. BUT NOW we see not YET all things put under him. But we see JESUS, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor." Heb. ii. 6, &c. See also 1 Cor. xv. 27.

7. *All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field;* 8. *The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea,* and whatsoever *passeth through the paths of the sea.*

Adam, upon his creation, was invested with sovereign dominion over the creatures, in words of the same import with these; Gen. i. 28, which are therefore here used, and the creatures particularized, to inform us, that what the first Adam lost by transgression, the second Adam regained by obedience. That "glory" which was "set above the heavens," could not but be over all things on "the earth." And accordingly, we hear our Lord

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saying, after his resurrection, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth:" Matt. xxviii. 18. Nor is it a speculation unpleasing, or unprofitable, to consider, that he who rules over the material world, is Lord also of the intellectual, or spiritual creation, represented thereby. The souls of the faithful, lowly and harmless, are the sheep of his pasture; those who, like oxen, are strong to labor in the church, and who, by expounding the word of life, tread out the corn for the nourishment of the people, own him for their kind and beneficent Master; nay, tempers fierce and untractable as the wild beasts of the desert, are yet subject to his will; spirits of the angelic kind, that, like the bird of the air, traverse freely the superior region, move at his command; and those evil ones, whose habitation is in the deep abyss, even to the great Leviathan himself; all, all, are put under the feet of King Messiah; who, "because he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, was therefore highly exalted, and had a name given him above every name, that at the name of JESUS every knee should bow, whether of things in heaven, or things on earth, or things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that JESUS is LORD, to the glory of God the Father." Phil. ii. 8, &c.

9. *O* LORD, *our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!*

Let therefore the universal chorus of men and angels join their voices together, and make their sound to be heard as one, in honor of the Redeemer, evermore praising him, and saying, O LORD, our Lord Jesu Christ, King of Righteousness, Peace, and Glory, King of kings, and Lord of lords, how excellent, how precious, how lovely, how great and glorious is thy Name, diffused over all the earth, for the salvation of thy chosen! Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever. And let heaven and earth say, AMEN.

SECOND DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM IX.

ARGUMENT.

THIS Psalm consists of two parts, a thanksgiving, 1—12, and a prayer, 13—20. Upon what particular occasion it was composed, is not known; probably to celebrate the victories gained by David over the neighboring nations, after God had exalted him to be king in Sion. See ver. 11. But most certainly the Psalm was intended for the use of the Christian Church; and she continually, by using it, 1, 2, declares her resolution to celebrate the praises of her God; since, 3, 4, her enemies were vanquished, and her cause was carried; 5, 6, the empire of Satan was subverted, and, 7, 8, the kingdom of Christ established; 9, 10, affording to believers refuge and salvation. For all these blessings, 11, Christians are excited to praise their Redeemer, who, 12, forgets nothing that is done or suffered for his sake. 13, 14, the Church petitions for final deliverance from the world, and the evil thereof; 15, 16, building her hope upon the mercies already received, 17, 18, she foretels the destruction of the wicked; and, 19, 20, prays for the manifestation of God.

1. *I will praise thee, O* LORD, *with my whole heart; I will show forth all thy marvellous works.*

In this animated and exalted hymn, the church begins with declaring her resolution to "praise Jehovah," as the author of her salvation; and that, neither coldly, as if the salvation were little worth; nor partially, reserving a share of the glory of it to herself; but with the "whole heart," with an affection pure and flaming, like the holy fire upon the altar. She is determined to "show forth" to the world, for its conviction and conversion, "all his marvellous works," the most "marvellous" of which are those wrought for, and in the souls of men. Outward miracles strike more forcibly upon the senses; but they are introductory only to those internal operations, which they are intended to represent.

2. *I will be glad and rejoice in thee; I will sing praise to thy name, O thou most High.*

Christians are taught to "be glad and rejoice," not in abundance of wealth, or plentitude of power, not in the pleasures of sense, or the praise of men, but in God their Saviour; and their joy is as far superior to the joy of the worldly, as the object of one is to that of the other. He who, with the spirit and the understanding, as well as with the voice, "sings praise to thy name, O most High," is employed as the angels are, and experiences a foretaste of the delight they feel.

3. *When mine enemies are driven back, they shall fall,* or, *they stumble,* or *fall, and perish at thy presence.*

The church begins to explain the subject of her joy, which is a victory over her "enemies;" a victory not gained by herself, but by the "presence of God" in the midst of her. The grand enemy of our salvation was first vanquished by Christ in the wilderness, and "driven back" with the words,

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"Get thee behind me, Satan." The same blessed person afterward completely triumphed over him upon the cross, when the "prince of this world was cast out." This is that great victory which we celebrate in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, from generation to generation; and, through faith in him who achieved it, we likewise are enabled to fight and to overcome.

4. *For thou hast maintained my right and my cause; thou sattest in the throne judging right.*

The same important transaction is here described in forensic, as before it was in military terms. Satan having gotten possession of mankind, might have pleaded his right to keep it, since by transgression they had left God, and sold themselves to him. But Christ, as the church's representative and advocate, made the satisfaction required, paid down the price of redemption, "took the prey from the mighty, and delivered the lawful captive: Isa. xlix. 24. Thus was our "right and our" cause maintained;" thus we were rescued from the oppressor, and he who "sat on the throne judged righteous judgment." Something of this sort may be supposed to pass, concerning each individual, between the Accuser of the brethren and the eternal Intercessor, in the court of heaven.

5. *Thou hast rebuked the heathen, thou hast destroyed the wicked, thou hast put out their name for ever and ever.*

To the victory of Christ succeeded the overthrow of Satan's empire in the pagan world. "The heathen were rebuked," when, through the power of the Spirit, in those who preached the Gospel, men were convinced of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment; "the wicked were destroyed, and their name put out for ever," when the Roman power became Christian, and the ancient idolatry sunk to rise no more. A day is coming when all iniquity shall perish and be forgotten in like manner.

6. *O thou enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end,* or, *the destructions of the enemy are completed to the utmost: and thou O* GOD, *hast destroyed their cities, their memorial is perished with them!* *

The Christian church, when repeating these words, may be supposed to take a retrospect view of the successive fall of those empires, with their capital "cities," in which the "enemy" had from time to time fixed his residence, and which had vexed and persecuted the people of God in different ages. Such were the Assyrian, or Babylonian, the Persian, and Grecian monarchies. All these vanished away, and came to nothing. Nay, the very "memorial" of the stupendous Nineveh and Babylon is so "perished with them," that the place where they once stood is now no more to be found. The Roman empire was the last of the pagan persecuting powers; and when the church saw "that" under her feet, well might she cry out, "The destructions of the enemy are completed to the utmost!" How lovely will this song be, in the day when the last enemy shall be destroyed, and the world itself shall become what Babylon is at present. Next to the glory and triumph of that day, is the jubilee which the Christian celebrates, upon his conquest over the body of sin.

7. *But the* LORD *shall endure for ever; he hath prepared his throne for judgment.* 8. *And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness.*

In opposition to the transient nature of earthly kingdoms, the eternal duration of Messiah's kingdom is asserted; as also its universality, extending over the whole "world;" together with the consummate rectitude of its administration. To him, as supreme judge in an unerring court of equity, lies an appeal from the unjust determinations here below: and by him in person shall every cause be reheard, when that court shall sit, and all nations shall be summoned to appear before it.

9. *The* LORD *also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.*

In the mean time, and until he returneth to judgment, the poor in spirit, the meek and lowly penitent, however "oppressed in times of trouble," by worldly and ungodly men, and by the frequent assaults of the wicked one, still finds a refuge in Jesus; who renews his strength by fresh supplies of grace, arms him with faith and patience, and animates him with the hope of glory.

10. *And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee; for thou,* LORD, *hast not forsaken them that seek thee.*

Therefore, they who "know God's name," that is, who are acquainted with, and have experienced his merciful nature and disposition, expressed in that name, will take no unlawful methods to escape affliction, nor "put their trust" in any but "him," for deliverance; since a most undoubted truth (and, O what a comfortable truth!) it is, that "thou, Lord Jesus, hast not forsaken," nor ever wilt finally "forsake them that" sincerely and diligently, with their whole heart, "seek" to "thee" for help; as a child, upon

* Bishop Lowth renders this verse to the same effect. "Desolations have consumed the enemy for ever; and as to the cities which thou, *O God*, hast destroyed, their memory is perished with them." See Merrick's Annotations on the Psalms, p. 9.

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apprehension of danger, flies to the arms of its tender and indulgent parent.

11. *Sing praises to the* LORD *which dwelleth in Zion: declare among the people his doings.*

The church, having celebrated the power and the goodness of her Lord, exhorteth all her children to lift up their voices, and sing together, in full chorus, the praises of him whose tabernacle is in "Zion," who resides with men, upon the mountain of his holiness, and saith, "Behold I am with you always, even to the end of the world." And thus, not only "among the people," but also to principalities and powers in heavenly places, will be "declared" and made known by the voice of thanksgiving in the church, the manifold wisdom and mercy of God, in his "doings" towards man. See Ephes. iii. 10.

12. *When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them, and forgetteth not the cry of the humble.*

An objection might be started to the so much extolled loving kindness of God, namely, that in this world his faithful people are often afflicted and persecuted; nay, sometimes suffered to be killed all the day long, as sheep appointed to the slaughter. But this is obviated by the consideration, that all is not over, as wicked men may suppose, at death; that a strict "inquisition" will be appointed hereafter, when the "blood" of martyrs and the sufferings of confessors shall not be "forgotten." He remembereth "THEM," that is, those who seek him, mentioned verse 10; so that the exhortation to "sing praises," &c. ver. 11, seems parenthetic.

13. *Have mercy upon me, O* LORD, *consider the trouble* which I suffer *of them that hate me, thou that liftest me up from the gates of death.*

We are now come to the second part of the Psalm. The church, after having, in the former part, strengthened her faith by commemoration of the mighty works God had wrought for her, proceeds, in this, to pour forth a prayer for farther and final deliverance. She speaks, as still militant upon earth, still in an enemy's country, surrounded by them that hate her, and suffering much from them. To whom therefore should she address herself, but to him whose high prerogative it is, literally to "raise from the gates of death;" to him who is, in every possible sense, "the resurrection and the life!"

14. *That I may show forth all thy praise in the gates of the daughter of Zion: I will rejoice in thy salvation.*

The members of the church militant despair of being able to "show forth all God's praise," till they become members of the church triumphant. There is a beautiful contrast between "the gates of death," in the preceding verse, and "the gates of the daughter of Zion," or the heavenly Jerusalem, in this: the one lead down to the pit, the other up to the mount of God; the one open into perpetual darkness, the other into light eternal; from the one proceeds nothing but what is evil, from the other nothing but what is good; infernal spirits watch at the one, the other are unbarred by the hands of angels. What a blessing then is it, to be snatched from the former, and transported to the latter! Who but must "rejoice" in such "salvation!"

15. *The heathen are sunk,* or *sink, down in the pit* that *they made; in the net which they hid is their own foot taken.* 16. *The* LORD *is known* by *the judgment* which *he executeth; the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands.*

Faith beholds, as already executed, that righteous judgment, whereby wicked men and evil spirits will fall into the perdition which they had prepared for others, either openly by persecution, or more covertly by temptation. See Ps. vii. 15, 16.

17. *The wicked shall be turned into hell,* and *all the nations that forget God.*

All wickedness came originally with the wicked one from hell; thither it will be again remitted, and they who hold on its side must accompany it on its return to that place of torment, there to be shut up for ever. The true state both of "nations," and the individuals of which they are composed, is to be estimated from one single circumstance, namely, whether in their doings they remember or "forget God." Remembrance of Him is the well-spring of virtue; forgetfulness of Him the fountain of vice.

18. *For the needy shall not always be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever.*

They who remember God shall infallibly be remembered by Him; and let this be their anchor, in the most tempestuous seasons. The body of a martyr is buried in the earth; and so is the root of the fairest flower; but neither of them "perisheth for ever." Let but the winter pass and the spring return, and, lo, the faded and withered flower blooms; the body sown in corruption, dishonor, and weakness, rises in incorruption, glory, and power.

19. *Arise, O* LORD, *let not men prevail: let the heathen be judged in thy sight.*

And now, the Spirit and the Bride say, Come; Arise, O Lord Jesu, from thy throne of glory, and come quickly; "let not" the "man" of sin "prevail" against thy church; but let the long depending cause between her and her adversaries, "be judged" and finally determined "in thy sight."

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20. *Put them in fear, O* LORD, that *the nations may know themselves* to be but *men.*

Strange, that man, dust in his original, sinful by his fall, and continually reminded of both by every thing in him and about him, should yet stand in need of some sharp affliction, some severe visitation from God, to bring him to the knowledge of himself, and make him feel, who, and what he is. But this is frequently the case; and when it is, as there are wounds which cannot be healed without a previous application of caustics, mercy is necessitated to begin her work with an infliction of judgment.

PSALM X.

ARGUMENT.

THIS Psalm is, in the LXX, joined to the preceding, but, in the Hebrew, divided from it. The church, under persecution from the spirit of anti-christ in the world, after, 1, an humble expostulation with her Lord, setteth down the marks whereby that spirit may be known; such as, 2, hatred of the faithful; 3, self-willedness and worldly-mindedness; 4, infidelity; 5, 6, profligacy and pride; 7, profaneness and perjury; 8—10, subtilty and treachery employed against the people of God; 11, security and presumption. From the persecutions of such a spirit the church, 12—15, prayeth earnestly to be delivered; and, 16—18, through faith, rejoiceth in tribulation.

1. *Why standest thou afar off, O* LORD? why *hidest thou* thyself *in times of trouble?*

During the conflict between the church and her adversaries, God is represented as one withdrawing to a distance, instead of affording succor; nay, as one concealing himself, so as not to be found by those who petitioned for aid, or counsel. To behold the righteous cause oppressed, and good men seemingly deserted by heaven, at a time when they most need its assistance, is apt to offend the weak, and oftentimes stagger those who are strong. It is indeed a sore trial, but intended to make us perfect in the practice of three most important duties, humility, resignation, and faith. That we may not faint under the severity of this discipline, let us ever bear in mind, that the beloved Son of the Father, the Son in whom he was well pleased, had once occasion to utter these words, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

2. *The wicked in* his *pride doth persecute the poor; let them,* or *they shall, be taken in the devices that they have imagined.*

Inconceivable is that malignant fury, with which a conceited infidel persecutes an humble believer, though that believer hath no otherwise offended him than by being such. And what wonder? since it is a copy of the hatred which Satan bears to Christ. But the devices of the adversaries, like those of their leader, will end in their own eternal confusion.

3. *For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous* whom *the* LORD *abhorreth.*

The first part of this verse points out that alarming symptom of a reprobate mind, a disposition to exult and glory in those lusts, which are the shame and disgrace of human nature, whether the world or the flesh be their object. The latter clause is differently rendered, as implying either that "the wicked blesseth the covetous, whom God abhorreth," or that "the wicked, being covetous, or oppressive, blesseth himself and abhorreth God." Either way an oppressing, griping, worldly spirit is characterized, with its direct opposition to the spirit of God, which teaches, that sin is to be confessed with shame and sorrow; that in God alone man is to make his boast; and that it is more blessed to give, than to receive.

4. *The wicked through the pride of his countenance will not seek* after God; *God* is *not in all his thoughts;* or, *all his imaginations are, There is no God.*

The counsels of heaven are not known by the wicked, because they are not sought after; and they are not sought after, because of a diabolical self-sufficiency, which, having taken possession of the heart, displays itself in the countenance, and reigns throughout the man. He wants no Prophet to teach him, no Priest to atone for him, no King to conduct him; he needs neither a Christ to redeem, nor a Spirit to sanctify him; he believes no Providence, adores no Creator, and fears no Judge. Thus he lives a "stranger from the covenants of promise, and without God in the world." Ephes. ii. 12. O that this character now existed only in the Psalmist's description!

5. *His ways are always grievous,* or, *corrupt; thy judgments* are *far above out of his sight;* as for *all his enemies, he puffeth at them.*

As are a man's principles, such will be his practices; and if he hath not God in his thoughts, his course of life will be corrupt and abominable, his end, his means, and his motives being all wrong, and polluted with concupiscence. There would have been some chance of holding him by fear, but that is gone with his faith; for no man can tremble at judgments in which he does not believe.

6. *He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved; for* I shall *never* be *in adversity.*

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Prosperity begets presumption, and he who has been long accustomed to see his designs succeed, begins to think it impossible they should ever do otherwise. The long-suffering of God, instead of leading such an one to repentance, only hardens him in his iniquity. Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, he thinks it will not be executed at all. He vaunteth himself, therefore, like the proud Chaldean monarch, in the Babylon which he hath erected, and fondly pronounceth it to be immortal. Such, it is too evident, are often the vain imaginations of triumphant wickedness.

7. *His mouth is full of cursing, deceit, and fraud; under his tongue* is *mischief and vanity.*

From the thoughts of the sinner's "heart," mentioned in the preceding verse, David goes on to describe the words of his "mouth." And here we may illustrate the character of antichrist, by setting that of Christ in opposition to it. The mouth of one poureth forth a torrent of curses and lies; from that of the other flowed a clear and copious stream of benediction and truth. Under the serpentine tongue of the former is a bag of mischief and vanity; but honey and milk were under the tongue of the latter, so pleasant and so nourishing to the spirits of men were all his communications.

8. *He sitteth in the lurking places of the villages; in the secret places doth he murder the innocent: his eyes are privily set against the poor.*

From "words," the description proceeds to "actions." And with regard to these, as the Son of God went publicly preaching through cities and villages to save men's lives, so this child of Satan lieth in ambush to destroy them, privily bringing into the church, and diffusing among the people, pestilent errors, and damnable heresies, for that purpose.

9. *He lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his den; he lieth in wait to catch the poor: he doth catch the poor, when he draweth him into his net.*

The disciples of Jesus, like their blessed Master, are ever vigilant to catch men in the evangelical net, in order to draw them from the world to God: the partisans of Satan, in imitation of their leader, are employed in watching, from their lurking places, the footsteps of the Christian pilgrim, that they may spring upon him in an unguarded moment, and draw him from God to the world, and from thence to the devil.

10. *He croucheth*, and *humbleth himself, that the poor may fall by his strong ones.*

Our Lord, who is styled "the Lion of the tribe of Judah," became a "Lamb," for the salvation of mankind; but when his adversary at any time "humbleth" himself, when the wolf appears in sheep's clothing, let the flock beware; it is for their more effectual destruction. And if, allured by an outward show of moderation and benevolence, the simple ones shall venture themselves within his reach, they will soon find that his nature is disguised, but not altered.

11. *He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten; he hideth his face, he will never see* it.

For the chastisement of his people, God often suffers the enemy to prevail and prosper, who then ridicules the faith and hope of the church, and solaces himself in the conceit, that if there be a God, he either knows not, or cares not, what is done upon earth. These Epicurean notions, however absurd and unworthy of the Deity they may seem, do yet in some measure take possession of every man's mind at the instant of his committing a sin; since it is most certain, that, with a due impression of the divine omniscience upon his soul at the time, he would not commit it, for all that the tempter could offer him. But faith is apt to sleep, and then sin awakes.

12. *Arise, O* LORD; *O God, lift up thine hand; forget not the humble.* 13. *Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God? He hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require* it.

The church now prays, that Jehovah, in vindication of his own honor and attributes, would arise to judgment, and make bare his glorious arm for the defence of his elect, who cry day and night unto him. Thus would the insolence of the wicked one and his agents, founded on the divine forbearance, be repressed, and all the world would see, that God had not forgotten, but still, as ever, remembered and regarded the low estate of his handmaid.

14. *Thou hast seen* it, *for thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite* it *with thine hand: the poor committeth himself unto thee; thou art the helper of the fatherless.*

"The wicked," above, "saith in his heart, thou wilt not requite it." But the faithful are taught other things by the promises in Scripture, and the experience of unnumbered histories. They know assuredly, that God beholds all that travail and vexation which some inflict, and others sustain, upon the earth; and that he will infallibly recompense to the former their deeds, to the latter their sufferings. Destitute should we be of every earthly help, in the state of beggars and orphans, yet in him will we trust, who, as

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the father and protector of all such, saith unto every one of us, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

15. *Break thou the arm of the wicked and the evil* man: *seek out his wickedness* till *thou find none.*

This may be either a prayer, or a prediction, implying that the time will come, when the power of Jehovah will dash in pieces that of the enemy, by the demolition either of sin or the sinner, until wickedness be come utterly to an end, and righteousness be established for ever in the kingdom of Messiah. And, lo,

16. *The* LORD *is King for ever and ever: the heathen are perished out of the land.*

Faith beholds the Lord Jesus, as already manifested in his glorious majesty, the kingdoms of this world become his, and the Canaanite no more in the land of promise. Each individual experiences in himself a happy prelude to this manifestation, when Christ rules in his heart by the Spirit, and every appetite and affection is obedient to the sceptre of his kingdom.

17. LORD, *thou hast heard,* or, *hearest, the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare,* or, *thou preparest, their heart: thou wilt cause,* or, *thou causest, thine ear to hear.*

How many important and comforting truths have we here, in a few words! As, that the "humble" and lowly, whatever they may suffer in the world, are the favorites of Jehovah: that he attends to the very "desires" of their hearts: that such hearts "prepared" to prayer, are so many instruments strung and tuned by the hand of heaven: and that their prayer is as music, to which the Almighty himself listens with pleasure.

18. *To judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may no more oppress.*

For the sake of the elect, and their prayers, the days of persecution and tribulation will be shortened; the insolence of the earth-born oppressor, the man of sin, will be chastised; the cause of the church will be heard at the tribunal of God; and victory, triumph, and glory will be given unto her. In the foregoing exposition, regard has been chiefly had to the case of the church, and to her sufferings from the spirit of antichrist, in whomsoever existing and acting, from time to time, in the world; this being judged the most generally useful application, which Christians, as such, can make of the Psalm. Particular accommodations of it to the various oppressions of innocent poverty by iniquitous opulence, will meet the eye, and offer themselves at once to persons so circumstanced, for their support and comfort, under their respective afflictions; which will be also not a little alleviated by the consideration, that the whole church of God groaneth with them, and travaileth in pain, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body. Then, and not till then, tears shall cease to run down the cheeks of misery; and sorrow and sighing shall fly away, to return no more for ever.

PSALM XI.

ARGUMENT.

THE Psalmist, under persecution, 1—3, declareth himself resolved to trust in God alone, at a time when he was advised to fly to some place of refuge; 4, he expresses his faith in the omniscience and over-ruling power of Jehovah; 5, assigns the reason why good men are afflicted; who, after that the wicked, 6, shall be destroyed, will appear to have been all along, 7, the favored of God.

1. *In the* LORD *put I my trust; how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?*

The Christian, like David, in perilous times, should make God his fortress, and continue doing his duty in his station; he should not, at the instigation of those about him, like a poor, silly, timorous, inconstant bird, either fly for refuge to the devices of worldly wisdom, or desert his post, and retire into solitude, while he can serve the cause in which he is engaged. Nor indeed is there any "mountain" on earth out of the reach of care and trouble. Temptations are every where; and so is the grace of God.

2. *For, lo, the wicked bend* their *bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart.*

These seem to be still the words of David's friends, representing to him, as a motive for his flight, the extreme danger he was in from the "arrows" of the enemy, already, as it were, fitted to the "string," and pointed at him "in secret," so that not knowing from whence they were to come, he could not guard against them. The Christian's danger from the darts of the infernal archers, lying in wait for his soul, is full as great as that of David. But "the sheild of FAITH" sufficeth in both cases.

3. *If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?*

This likewise seems to be spoken by the same persons, discouraging David from making any farther resistance, by the consideration that all was over; the "foundations"

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of religion and law were subverted; and what could a man, engaged in the most "righteous" designs, hope to "do," when that was the case? Such arguments are often urged by the timid, in similar circumstances; but they are fallacious; since all is not over, while there is a man left to reprove error, and bear testimony to the truth. And a man who does it with becoming spirit, may stop a prince, or senate, when in full career, and recover the day. But let us hear David's farther reply to his advisers.

4. *The* LORD *is in his holy temple, the* LORD'S *throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.*

In the first verse, the Psalmist had declared his trust to be in Jehovah. After reciting the reasonings of his friends, he now proceeds to evince the fitness and propriety of such trust, notwithstanding the seemingly desperate situation of affairs. "Jehovah is in his holy temple;" into which, therefore, unholy men, however triumphant in this world, can never enter; "Jehovah's throne is in heaven;" and consequently superior to all power upon earth, which may be controlled and overruled by him in a moment; "his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men;" so that no secret wickedness can escape his knowledge, who scrutinizeth the hearts as well as the lives of all the sons of Adam. Why, then, should the man despair, who hath on his side holiness, omnipotence, and omniscience?

5. *The* LORD *trieth the righteous; but the wicked, and him that loveth violence, his soul hateth.*

As to the afflictions which persons may suffer, who are embarked in a righteous cause, they are intended to purge away the dross and to refine them for the Master's use. "Gold," saith the son of Sirach, "is tried in the fire, and acceptable men in the furnace of adversity:" Ecclus. ii. 5. In the mean time, God's displeasure against the wicked is ever the same, and their prosperity, instead of benefiting, will in the end destroy them. The cases of David and Saul, Christ and the Jews, the martyrs and their persecutors, are all cases in point, and should be often in our thoughts to teach us patience, and guard us against despair, in seasons of calamity, pain, or disgrace.

6. *Upon the wicked he shall rain snares*, or, *burning coals, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest;* this shall be *the portion of their cup.*

St. Jude, ver. 7, tells us, that the cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, &c., for their abominable sins, "προκεινται δειγμα, are set forth for an example, or, specimen, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." And here we see the images are plainly taken from the dreadful judgment inflicted on those cities, and transferred to the vengeance of the last day. Then the sons of faithful Abraham shall behold a prospect like that which once presented itself to the eyes of their father; when rising early in the morning, and looking toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, he "beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace!" Gen. xix. 28. Such must be the "portion of their cup," who have dashed from them the cup of salvation. He, therefore, who would enjoy the prosperity of the wicked here, must take with it their torment hereafter; as he who is ambitious of wearing the crown of righteousness in heaven, must be content to endure tribulation upon earth.

7. *For the righteous* LORD *loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright.*

He who is in himself essential righteousness, cannot but love his own resemblance, wrought in the faithful by his good Spirit; with a countenance full of paternal affection, he beholds, and speaks peace and comfort to them, in the midst of their sorrows; until admitted, through mercy, to the glory, from which justice excludes the wicked, and beholding that countenance which has always beheld them, they shall enter upon a life of boundless and everlasting felicity.

SECOND DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM XII.

ARGUMENT.

THE church, through David, 1, 2, laments the decrease of God's faithful servants, and the universal corruption among men, but, 3—5, rests upon the divine promises, the truth and certainty of which, 6, 7, she celebrates, and comforts herself therewith, while in a world where oftentimes, 8, the wicked walk uncontrolled.

1. *Help*, Heb. *save*, LORD, *for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men.*

Our Lord foretells, that in the later days, "because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold;" and seems to question whether, "when the Son of man cometh, he shall find faith upon the earth." The universal depravity of Jew and Gentile caused the church, of old, to pray earnestly for the first advent of Christ; and a like depravity among those who call themselves Christians, may induce her to pray no less earnestly for his appearance the second time unto salvation. It is frequently a benefit, to be destitute of help from man, both as it puts us upon

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seeking it from God, and inclines him to grant it, when we do seek.

2. *They speak vanity*, or, *a lie, every one with his neighbor:* with *flattering lips*, and *with a double heart do they speak.*

When men cease to be faithful to their God, he who expects to find them so to each other, will be much disappointed. The primitive sincerity will accompany the primitive piety in her flight from the earth; and then interest will succeed conscience in the regulation of human conduct, till one man cannot trust another farther than he holds him by that tie. Hence, by the way, it is, that although many are infidels themselves, yet few choose to have their families and dependants such; as judging, and rightly judging, that true Christians are the only persons to be depended on, for the exact discharge of social duties.

3. *The* LORD *shall cut off all flattering lips*, and *the tongue that speaketh proud things:* 4. *Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail, our lips* are *our own: who* is *lord over us?*

They who take pleasure in deceiving others, will at the last find themselves most of all deceived, when the Sun of truth, by the brightness of his rising, shall at once detect and consume hypocrisy. And as to men of another stamp, who speak great swelling words of vanity; who vaunt themselves in the arm of flesh, thinking to prevail by human wit, or human power; equally deplorable will be their case, when the Lord God "omnipotent" reigneth.

5. *For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the* LORD, *I will set him* in *safety* from him that *puffeth at him.*

For the consolation of the afflicted and poor in spirit, Jehovah is here introduced promising, out of compassion to their sufferings, to "arise, and set them in safety," or place them in a state of "salvation." Such all along has been his promise to the church, who, by looking back to the deliverances wrought of old for the servants of God, and, above all, to that wrought for the Son of God, is now encouraged to look forward, and expect her final redemption from the scorn and insolence of infidelity.

6. *The words of the* LORD are *pure words; as silver tried in a furnace*, or, *crucible of earth, purified seven times.*

The church rejoices in the promises of God her Saviour, because they are such as she can confide in. His words are not like those of deceitful boasting man, but true and righteous altogether. Often have they been put to the test, in the trials of the faithful, like silver committed to the furnace, in an earthen crucible; but like silver in its most refined and exalted purity, found to contain no dross of imperfection, no alloy of fallibility in them. The words of Jehovah are holy in his precepts, just in his laws, gracious in his promises, significant in his institutions, true in his narrations, and infallible in his predictions. What are the thousands of gold and silver, compared to the treasures of the sacred page!

7. *Thou shalt keep them, O* LORD, *thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.*

As if it had been said, Yes, blessed Lord, what thou hast promised shall surely be performed, since there is with thee no variableness, nor shadow of turning: thou wilt keep thy poor and lowly servants, as thou hast promised, from being circumvented by treachery, or crushed by power; thou wilt preserve them undefiled amidst an evil and adulterous generation: thou wilt be with thy church to the end of the world, and then admit her to be with thee for ever.

8. *The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted.*

While the faithful repose, as they ought to do, an unlimited confidence in God's promises, they have, in the mean time, but too much reason to mourn the prevalence of wickedness, stalking, like its author, to and fro, and up and down in the earth, uncontrolled by those who bear the sword, but who either blunt its edge, or turn it the wrong way. Such is often the state of things here below; and a reflection, made upon the subject by our Lord, when his enemies drew near to apprehend him, may satisfy us how it comes to be so: "It is your hour, and the power of darkness." But that hour will quickly pass with us, as it did with him, and the power of darkness will be overthrown; the Lord will be our everlasting light, and the days of our mourning shall be ended.

PSALM XIII.

ARGUMENT.

THIS Psalm contains, 1, 2, a complaint of desertion; 3, 4, a prayer for the divine assistance; 5, 6, an act of faith and thanksgiving.

1. *How long wilt thou forget me, O* LORD? *for ever? How long wilt thou hide thy face from me?*

While God permits his servants to continue under affliction, he is said, after the manner of men, to have "forgotten, and hid his face from them." For the use, therefore, of persons in such circumstances, is this

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Psalm intended; and, consequently, it suits the different cases of the church universal, languishing for the advent of our Lord to deliver her from this evil world; of any particular church, in time of persecution; and of each individual, when harassed by temptations, or broken by sickness, pain, and sorrow. He who bore our sins, and carried our sorrows, may likewise be presumed to have made it a part of his devotions in the day of trouble.

2. *How long shall I take counsel in my soul*, having *sorrow in my heart daily? How long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?*

To excite compassion, and prevail for help from above, the petitioner mentions three aggravating circumstances of his misery: the perplexity of his soul, not knowing which way to turn, or what course to take; his heart-felt sorrow, uttering itself in sighs and groanings; and the mortifying reflection, that his enemies were exulting in their conquest over him. All this will happen, and be particularly painful, to him who has yielded to temptation, and committed sin.

3. *Consider* and *hear me, O* LORD *my God; lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the* sleep of *death.*

On the preceding considerations is founded a prayer to Jehovah, that he would no longer hide his face, but "consider," or, more literally, "have respect to, favorably behold" his servant; that he would "hear, attend to, be mindful of" his supplication in distress. The deliverance requested is expressed figuratively, "Lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death." In time of sickness and grief, the "eyes" are dull and heavy; and they grow more and more so as death approaches, which closes them in darkness. On the other hand, health and joy render the organs of vision bright and sparkling, seeming, as it were, to impart "light" to them from within. The words, therefore, may be fitly applied to a recovery of the body natural, and thence of the body politic, from their respective maladies. Nor do they less significantly describe the restoration of the soul to a state of spiritual health and holy joy, which will manifest themselves in like manner, by "the eyes of the understanding being enlightened;" and in this case, the soul is saved from the sleep of sin, as the body is, in the other, from the sleep of death.

4. *Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him;* and *those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved.*

This argument we often find urged in prayer to God, that he should be pleased to work salvation for his people, lest his and their enemies should seem to triumph over him as well as them; which would indeed have been the case, had Satan either seduced the true David to sin, or confined him in the grave. And certainly it should be a powerful motive to restrain us from transgression, when we consider, that as the conversion of a sinner brings glory to God, and causes joy among the angels of heaven; so the fall of a believer disgraces the Gospel of Jesus, opens the mouths of the adversaries, and would produce joy, if such a thing could be, in hell itself.

5. *But I have trusted*, or, *I trust, in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice*, or, *rejoices, in thy salvation.* 6. *I will sing unto the* LORD, *because he hath dealt*, or, *deals, bountifully with me.*

The heart which "trusteth in God's mercy," shall alone "rejoice in his salvation," and celebrate by the tongue, in songs of praise, the loving kindness of the Lord. It is observable, that this, and many other Psalms, with a mournful beginning, have a triumphant ending; to show us the prevailing power of devotion, and to convince us of the certain return of prayer, sooner or later, bringing with it the comforts of heaven, to revive and enrich our weary and barren spirits in the gloomy seasons of sorrow and temptation, like the dew descending by night upon the withered summit of an eastern mountain.

PSALM XIV.

ARGUMENT.

THIS Psalm is in a manner the same with the 53d. It sets forth, 1—3, the corruption of the world; 4—6, its enmity against the people of God; 7, the prophet longs and prays for salvation.

1. *The fool hath said in his heart*, There is *no God: they are corrupt, they have done abominable works*, there is *none that doth good.*

It does not appear upon what occasion David composed this Psalm. The revolt of Israel in Absalom's rebellion, is by most writers pitched upon as the subject of it. But, be this as it may, the expressions are general, and evidently designed to extend beyond a private interpretation. And accordingly, the apostle, Rom. iii. 10, &c. produces some passages from it, to evince the apostasy of both Jews and Gentiles from their King and their God, and to prove them to be all under sin. In this light, therefore, we are to consider it, as characterizing the principles and practices of those who oppose the Gospel of Christ in all ages. "The fool hath said in

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his heart, There is no God." Infidelity is the beginning of sin, folly the foundation of infidelity, and the heart the seat of both. "Their foolish heart (says St. Paul of the heathen, Rom. 1. 21,) was darkened." The sad consequence of defection in principle, is corruption in practice. "They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doth good." On these words the reader may see a full comment, Rom. i. 28—32.

2. *The* LORD *looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there was any that did understand,* and *seek God.* 3. *They are all gone aside, they are* all *together become filthy,* or, *putrefied:* there is *none that doth good, no, not one.*

Like a watchman on the top of some lofty tower, God is represented as surveying, from his heavenly throne, the sons of Adam, and their proceedings upon the earth; he scrutinizes them, and as it were searches diligently, to find among them a man of true wisdom, one whose heart was turned toward the Lord his God, one who was inquiring the way to salvation and glory, that he might walk therein. But as the result of this extensive and accurate survey, God informs his prophet, and commissions him to inform the world, that all had declined from the paths of wisdom and righteousness; that the mass of human nature was become putrid, requiring to be cleansed, and the vessels made of it to be formed anew. Such is the Scripture account of man, not having received grace, or having fallen from it; of man without Christ, or in arms against him. See Rom. iii. 11, 12.

*4. *Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people* as *they eat bread, and call not upon the* LORD.

The "workers of iniquity" work for the wages of death; they fight against God and their own souls; they barter eternity for time, and part with happiness for misery, both in possession and reversion. Well therefore may it be asked, "Have they no knowledge?" For common sense, after all, is what they want. They who, with an appetite keen as that to their food, prey upon the poor, and devour the people of God, will themselves be preyed upon and devoured by that roaring lion, whose agents for the present they are; and such as now "call not on" the name of "the Lord" Jesus for pardon and salvation, shall hereafter call in vain upon the rocks and mountains, to shelter them from his power and vengeance.

5. *There were they in great fear; for God is in the generation of the righteous.*

In the parallel place, Ps. liii. 5, after the words, "There were they in great fear," are added these, "where no fear was," which certainly connect better with what follows, "for God is in the generation of the righteous." David is supposed to be speaking primarily of Israel's defection from him to Absalom, and here to be assigning the motive of that defection in many, namely, fear of the rebel's growing power, and distrust of his ability to protect them; which fear, he observes, was groundless, because his cause was the cause of God, who would not fail to appear in its support and vindication. The subjects of Christ, in times of persecution, are often tempted to renounce their allegiance, upon the same principle of fear; although of them it may more emphatically be said, that they "fear where no fear is, since God is in the generation of the righteous;" and they who are engaged on the side of Messiah will, in the end, most assuredly be triumphant. The latter clause of this verse, in Psalm liii. runs thus: "For God hath scattered, or, shall scatter, the bones of him that encampeth against thee; thou hast, or shalt, put them to shame, because God hath despised them:" the sense of which is evidently the same with—"God is in the generation of the righteous:" he will defend them and overthrow their enemies: therefore let them not fear, neither let their hearts be troubled. If this interpretation be disapproved, the words, "There were they in great fear;" must be understood of the enemy; and the clause, "where no fear was," must be rendered interrogatively thus, "and was there not cause for them to fear? since God is in the generation of the righteous, or, will scatter the bones of him that encampeth against thee," &c.

6. *Ye have shamed the counsel of the poor, because the* LORD *is his refuge.*

This is plainly addressed to the adversaries, and charges them with reproaching and scoffing at that confidence in the Lord, expressed by the afflicted righteous, in the preceding verse.

7. *O that the salvation of Israel* were come *out of Zion! When the Lord bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice,* and *Israel shall be glad.*

The consideration of the apostasy and corruption of mankind, described in this Psalm,

* Between the preceding verse and this are three others inserted in our common translation, which, though taken by St. Paul from other parts of Scripture, yet because (Rom. iii. 13) they followed the words cited from this Psalm, were probably added thereunto in this place by some transcribers of the copies of the LXX. For in other copies of the LXX, they exist not any more than in the Hebrew, Chaldee, or Syriac.

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makes the prophet express a longing desire for the salvation of Israel, which was to go forth out of Zion, and to bring back the people of God from that most dreadful of all captivities, the captivity under sin and death; a salvation, at which Jacob would indeed rejoice, and Israel be glad. And how doth the whole church, at this time, languish for the consummation of her felicty, looking, even until her eyes fail, for that glorious day of redemption, when every believing heart shall exult, and all the sons of God shout aloud for joy!

THIRD DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM XV.

ARGUMENT.

THIS is one of the Psalms appointed to be used on Ascension-day. The Prophet, 1, inquires concerning the person, who should ascend into the hill, and dwell in the temple of Jehovah; 2—5, he receives, in answer to his question, a character of such person.

1. LORD, *who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?*

The prophet alludes to the hill of Sion in the earthly Jerusalem, to the tabernacle of God which was thereon, and the character of the priest, who should officiate in that tabernacle. But all these were figures of a celestial Jerusalem, a spiritual Sion, a true tabernacle, and an eternal priest. To the great originals therefore we must transfer our ideas, and consider the inquiry as made after Him, who should fix his resting place on the heavenly mount, and exercise his unchangeable priesthood in the temple not made with hands. And since the disciples of this new and great High Priest become righteous in him, and are by the Spirit conformed to his image, the character which essentially and inherently belongs only to him, will derivatively belong to them also, who must follow his steps below, if they would reign with him above.

2. *He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.*

The man, therefore, who would be a citizen of Zion, and there enter into the rest and joy of his Lord, must set that Lord always before him. Renewed through grace, endued with a lively faith, and an operative charity, he must consider and imitate the life of that blessed Person who walked amongst men, without partaking of their corruptions; who conversed unblamably with sinners; who could give this challenge to his inveterate enemies, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" in whom the grand Accuser, when he came, "found nothing;" who, being himself "the Truth," thought and spake of nothing else; making many promises, and performing them all.

3. He that *backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doth evil to his neighbor, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor.*

Who, knowing the sins, follies, and infirmities of all mankind, made his tongue an instrument, not of disclosing and exasperating, but of covering and healing these sores in human nature; who, esteeming every son of Adam as his neighbor, went about doing good; and then laid down his life, and resigned his breath in prayer for his murderers; who, instead of taking up a reproach, and listening to the calumniator, cast him out, and silenced him by erasing the hand-writing that was against us, and nailing the cancelled indictment to the cross;

4. *In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoreth them that fear the* LORD: he that *sweareth to* his own *hurt, and changeth not.*

Who rejected the wicked, however rich and honorable; and chose the well inclined, however poor and contemptible in the world; who having, by covenant with the Father, engaged to keep the law, and to taste death for every man, went willingly and steadily through this work, and surmounted every obstacle which could be thrown in his way, until he declared, concerning the task appointed him, "It is finished;"

5. He that *putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent.*

Who was so far from desiring to amass the earthly mammon, that he would touch none of it; and received the true riches, only that he might bestow them upon others; who instead of taking a reward against the innocent, died for the guilty; and whose sentence, when he shall sit on the throne of judgment, will be equally impartial and immutable.

6. *He that doth these* things, *shall never be moved.*

In the above comment, it was thought most advisable to open and display the full intent of what was both enjoined and forbidden, by exemplifying each particular, as receiving its utmost completion, in the character and conduct of our blessed Lord. And whoever shall survey and copy these virtues and graces, as they present themselves in his life, will, it is humbly apprehended, take the best and shortest way to the heavenly Zion, and make that use of the xvth Psalm, which the Church may be supposed to have had in view, when she appointed it as one of the Proper Psalms for Ascension-day.

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PSALM XVI.

ARGUMENT.

Upon whatever occasion, or in whatever distress David might compose this Psalm, we are taught by St. Peter and St. Paul, Acts, ii. 25, and xiii. 35, to consider him as speaking in the person of our Lord Christ, of whom alone the latter part of the Psalm is true. The contents are, 1, a prayer for support; 2, 3, a declaration of love to the saints; 4, a protestation against idolaters; 5—8, acts of love, joy, and confidence in Jehovah; and, 9—11, one of hope in an approaching resurrection and glorification.

1. *Preserve me, O God; for in thee do I put my trust.*

These words are evidently spoken by one in great distress, who addresses himself to heaven for support under his sufferings, pleading his confidence in God, still unshaken by all the storms that had set themselves against it. This might be the case of David, and may be that of any believer. But since the Psalm is a continued speech without change of person, we may consider the whole as uttered by Him, who only could utter the concluding verses, and who in this first verse makes his supplication to the Father, for the promised and expected deliverance.

2. O my soul, *thou hast said unto the* LORD, *thou* art *my Lord: my goodness* extendeth *not to thee;* 3. But *to the saints that* are *in the earth, and* to *the excellent, in whom* is *all my delight.*

In the Chaldee and Syriac, the latter clause of the former of these two verses is rendered —"My goodness is from thee." An ingenious writer thinks the Hebrew will bear this sense, in the elliptical way, thus—"My goodness! shall I mention that! By no means; it is all to be ascribed to thee." The goodness of man is all derived from God, and should be extended to his brethren. That of Messiah owed its original to his union with the Divinity; and promoted the salvation of those to whom it was communicated, that is to say, of those who thereby became "the saints and excellent ones in the earth." For their sakes obedience was performed, and propitiation made, by the Son of God, because he loved them with an everlasting love, and placed "all his delight" in making them happy. He rejoiced in "the habitable parts of the earth, and his delights were with the sons of men." Prov. viii. 31.

4. *Their sorrows shall be multiplied* that *hasten* after *another* god: *their drink-offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips.*

Christ denounceth vengeance against those who should make to themselves other gods, run after other saviours, or suffer any creature to rival him in their affections; declaring of such, that their offerings should not be presented by him to the Father, nor should they be partakers of the benefits of his intercession. Even the bloody sacrifices of the law, instituted for a time by God himself, became abomination to him when that time was expired, and the one great sacrifice had been offered upon the altar of the cross.

5. *The* LORD is *the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup; thou maintainest my lot.* 6. *The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant* places; *yea, I have a goodly heritage.*

The true David, anointed to his everlasting kingdom, yet first a man of sorrows and a stranger upon earth, prefers the promised inheritance of the church, that spiritual kingdom, city, and temple of Jehovah, before all the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them; he is sure that Jehovah will maintain his lot, that he will both give and preserve to him this his patrimony; and therefore rejoices at the divine beauty and excellency of the heavenly Canaan. And hence the Christian learns wherein his duty and his happiness consist; namely, in making choice of God for "the portion of his inheritance and of his cup," for his support and for his delight; in preferring the spirit to the flesh, the church to the world, and eternity to time.

7. *I will bless the* LORD, *who hath given me counsel; my reins also instruct me in the night seasons.*

The person speaking here blesses Jehovah for communicating that divine "counsel," that celestial wisdom, by which he was incited and enabled to make the foregoing choice and resolution. In the latter part of the verse is intimated the mode of these gracious and spiritual communications, which in the dark seasons of adversity were conveyed to the inmost thoughts and affections of the mind, thereby to instruct, to comfort, and to strengthen the sufferer, until his passion should be accomplished, and the morning of the resurrection should dawn, in which, as we shall see, all his hope and confidence were placed.

8. *I have set the* LORD *always before me; because* he is *at my right hand, I shall not be moved.*

The method taken by Christ as man, to support himself in time of trouble, and persevere unto the end, was to maintain a constant actual sense of the presence of Jehovah, whom when he thus saw standing at his right hand, ready, at the appointed hour, to succor and deliver him, he then feared not the powers of earth and hell combined for his

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destruction. Why are our fears great, but because our faith is little?

9. *Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest in hope.*

Through confidence in the almighty power engaged on his side, joy filled the heart of Christ, and rendered his tongue an instrument of giving glory to Jehovah in the midst of his sufferings; because when they were ended, as they must soon be, his flesh was only to make its bed, and rest a while in the grave, after the labors of the day, in sure and certain hope of a speedy resurrection and glorification. This same consideration is to the afflicted, the sick, and the dying Christian, a never failing source of comfort, an inexhaustible fountain of joy: sin and infidelity are the enemies, who would fill it with earth.

10. *For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell: neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption.*

It was a part of the covenant of grace, and promised by the mouth of God's prophets, that after the death of Messiah, his animal frame, נפש, should not continue, like those of other men, in the grave, שאול, nor should corruption be permitted to seize on the body, by which all others were to be raised to incorruption and immortality. As members of Christ, this same promise and assurance is so far ours, that although our mortal part must see corruption, yet it shall not be finally left under the power of the enemy, but shall be raised again, and re-united to its old companion the soul, which exists, mean while, in secret and undiscerned regions, there waiting for the day when its Redeemer shall triumph over corruption, in his mystical, as he hath already done in his natural body.

11. *Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence* is *fulness of joy; at thy right hand* there are *pleasures for evermore.*

The return of Christ from the grave is beautifully described by Jehovah "showing," or discovering to him a "path of life," leading through the valley of the shadow of death, and from that valley to the summit of the hill of Zion, or to the mount of God in heaven, on which he now sits enthroned. There exalted at the right hand of the Father, that human body, which expired on the cross, and slept in the sepulchre, lives and reigns, filled with delight, and encircled by glory incomprehensible and endless. Through this thy beloved Son and our dear Saviour, "thou shalt show" us likewise, O Lord, "the path of life;" thou shalt justify our souls by thy grace now, and raise our bodies by thy power at the last day; when earthly sorrow shall terminate in heavenly joy, and momentary pain shall be rewarded with everlasting felicity.

PSALM XVII.

ARGUMENT.

THE Psalmist, confiding in the justice of his cause, 1—4, prayeth for a hearing and decision of it; 5—9, he petitioneth for the divine guidance and protection; 10—12, he describeth the temper and behavior of his enemies; 13, 14, beseecheth God to disappoint them, and to deliver him; he endeth with an act of faith.

1. *Hear the right, O* LORD, or, *Hear, O righteous* LORD, *attend unto my cry, give ear unto my prayer,* that goeth *not out of feigned lips.*

The righteousness of the judge, and the importunity and sincerity of the petitioner, are the arguments here urged for a speedy and favorable determination. Slander and calumny were the portion of David, and of a greater than David, till the righteous Lord manifested himself on their behalf. And shall not God, in like manner, judge and avenge the cause of "his own elect, who cry day and night unto him; I tell you," saith Christ himself, "that he will avenge them speedily:" Luke, xviii. 8. "Men ought always to pray, therefore, and not to faint."

2. *Let my sentence come forth from thy presence; let thine eyes behold the things that are equal.*

A court of equity is ever sitting in heaven, to receive appeals from the wrongful decisions of men here below; and in that court a judge presides, whose impartial hand holds the scales of justice even; whose unerring eye marks the least inclination of either; and from whose sentence injured innocence is therefore taught to expect redress.

3. *Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited* me *in the night; thou hast tried me,* and *shalt find nothing: I am purposed* that *my mouth shall not transgress.*

The sufferer's "heart condemns him not, and he has confidence towards God," to whom he applies as the proper judge, because the only witness of his integrity. God had "proved" not only his words and actions, but his "heart," which man could not do: God had "visited," observed, and explored him "in the night," when secrecy and solitude prompt the hypocrite to sin, and when the undisciplined imagination wanders abroad, like the bird of darkness, after forbidden objects: God had "tried" him, as silver or gold, in the fiery furnace of adversity; and if there be any dross or scum in the metal, it will then rise to the top, and show itself; yet nothing appeared, not so much as the alloy of an intemperate word. Absolutely and universally this could only be true of

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the holy Jesus; however, through his grace, it may be true of some of his disciples in particular instances of crimes falsely laid to their charge. Let us pray that it may be true of us, whenever God shall please to prove and try us.

4. *Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips I have kept* me from *the paths of the destroyer.*

The way to hold fast our integrity in time of temptation is here pointed out. "Concerning the works of men," that is, such works as fallen, depraved man has recourse to, when in distress, "by the word of thy lips," by treasuring up thy word in my heart, as the rule of my actions, and the guide of my life, "I have watched," observed, that is, in order to avoid "the paths of the destroyer." This seems to be the literal construction, and to convey the full meaning of the verse, which contains exactly the same sentiment with that in Psal. cxix. 11. "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." If the word either be not in the heart at all, or if it be not there in such a manner as to be ready at all times for use and application, the man is in danger, at every turn, of going astray.

5. *Hold up my goings in thy paths,* that *my footsteps slip not.*

The word of God affords us direction, but the grace of God must enable us to follow its direction, and that grace must be obtained by prayer. The "paths of God" are opposed to the "paths of the destroyer," the way of righteousness to that of sin. The image here is taken from one walking in a slippery path, for such is that of human life, by reason of temptations; so that the believer, especially if he be young, feeble, and inexperienced, has great need of a divine supporter in every step he takes.

6. *I have called upon thee, for thou wilt hear me,* or, *because thou hast heard me, O God: incline thine ear to me,* and hear *my speech.*

The sweet experience of former deliverances giveth a comfortable assurance of protection in present and future dangers; and this should cause us to fly for refuge at all times, by strong supplication and prayer, to him, who is able and willing to save us from death.

7. *Show thy marvellous loving kindness, O thou that savest by thy right hand them which put their trust* in thee *from those that rise up* against them.

This is an address to the "loving kindness," or mercy of God, which the Psalmist entreats him to display and magnify in his favor, since it was the promise, the delight, and the glory of Jehovah, to save those who believed and trusted in HIM. There are two ways of rendering the latter clause of this verse: either, "Thou who savest by thy right hand," &c., as our translation has it: or, "Thou that savest them which put their trust in thee from those that rise up at, or, against thy right hand," meaning the opposers of the divine counsels and dispensations: as in Zech. iii. 1, Satan is said to "stand at Joshua's right hand," to obstruct the building of the temple.

8. *Keep me as the apple of the eye: hide me under the shadow of thy wings.* 9. *From the wicked that oppress me,* from *my deadly enemies,* who *compass me about.*

He who has so fenced and guarded that precious and tender part, the pupil of the eye, and who has provided for the security of a young and helpless brood under the wings of their dam, is here entreated to extend the same providential care and parental love to the souls of his elect, equally exposed to danger, equally beset with enemies. Of his readiness so to do he elsewhere assureth us, under the same exquisite imagery, Zech. ii. 8. "He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye:" Matt. xxiii. 37. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings!"

10. *They are enclosed in their own fat; with their mouth they speak proudly.*

The last argument made use of by the Psalmist, in his address to God, is the character of his adversaries. He begins with their "pride," and its cause, "fulness of bread," or high living. Dr. Hammond prefers the rendering which follows: "They have shut up their mouth with fat; they speak proudly." Either way the meaning plainly is, that pride is the child of plenty, begotten by self-indulgence, which hardens the hearts of men against the fear of God, and the love of their neighbors; rendering them insensible to the judgments of the former, and the miseries of the latter. Let every man take care, that, by pampering the flesh, he do not raise up an enemy of this stamp against himself.

11. *They have now compassed us in our steps: they have set their eyes bowing down to the ground.*

"They have compassed us in our steps;" that is, literally, Saul and his followers had watched, pursued, and at last hemmed in David and his men: "They have set, or fixed their eyes" upon us, לנטות בארץ, "to lay us prostrate upon the earth," or finally to make an end of us. Such are our spiritual enemies; such is their intention, and our danger.

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12. *Like as a lion* that *is greedy of his prey, and as it were a young lion lurking in secret places.*

The similitude of a lion, either roaring abroad in quest of his prey, or couching in secret, ready to spring upon it the moment it comes within his reach, is often employed by David to describe the power and malice of his enemies. Christians cannot forget, that they likewise have an adversary of the same nature and character; one ever seeking whom, and contriving how, he may devour.

13. *Arise O* LORD, *disappoint him, cast him down: deliver my soul from the wicked,* which is *thy sword:* 14. *From men* which are *thy hand, O* LORD, *from men of the world,* which have *their portion in* this *life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid* treasure: *they are full of children, and leave the rest of their* substance *to their babes.*

The Psalmist, having characterized those who pursued after him to take away his life, now entreats God to "arise," or appear in his cause, to "disappoint," or "prevent" the enemy in his designs, and to "cast him down," to overthrow and subdue him. The next words may be thus rendered; "Deliver my soul from the wicked by thy sword, from men by thy hand, O LORD, from the men of the world;" the expressions, "sword" and "hand of Jehovah," being frequently used to denote his power and vengeance. The מתים מחלד or "mortals of the transitory world," from whom David prays to be delivered, are said to be such as have "their portion in this life," such as, in our Saviour's language, "have their reward" here, and are not to expect it hereafter; "whose bellies thou fillest with thy hid treasure;" whom thou permittest to enjoy temporal blessings in abundance, to "receive their good things" upon earth, and to "fare sumptuously every day;" as if it were to convince us, in what estimation we ought to hold the world, when we see the largest shares of it dealt out to the most worthless of the sons of Adam: "They are full of, or abound in children, and leave the residue of their substance to their babes;" after living in plenty, perhaps to a good old age, they leave behind them a numerous and flourishing posterity, who inherit their estates, and go on, as their fathers did before them, without piety to God, or charity to the poor. From these men and their ways, we have all reason to say with David, "Good Lord deliver us!"

15. *As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.*

Instead of setting our affections on things below, the prophet instructs us, after his example, to place all our happiness in the vision of God, and in that righteousness which leads to it; since the hour is coming, when we shall awake, and arise, after the divine similitude; when we shall be like God, for we shall see him as he is, and by seeing him shall be changed into the same image: and then shall every desire be satisfied with the fulness of joy, with the exceeding abundance of unutterable glory.

THIRD DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM XVIII.

ARGUMENT.

THIS Psalm, as we are informed by the sacred history, 2 Sam. xxii. 1, was composed and sung by David, in the day that the Lord had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul. It contains, ver. 1—3, an address of thanks to Jehovah; 4—6, a relation of sufferings undergone, and prayers made for assistance; 7—15, a magnificent description of the divine interposition in favor of the sufferer, and, 16—19, of the deliverance wrought for him, 20—24, in consideration of his righteousness, 25—28, according to the tenor of God's equitable proceedings; 29—36, to Jehovah is ascribed the glory of the victory, which, 37—42, is represented as every way complete, by the destruction of all opponents, and, 43—45, the submission of the heathen; for these events, 46—50, God is blessed and praised. As the sublimity of the figures used in this Psalm, and the consent of ancient commentators, even Jewish as well as Christian, but above all, the citations made from it in the New Testament, do evince, that the kingdom of Messiah is here pointed at, under that of David, an application is therefore made of the whole, in the ensuing comment, to the sufferings, resurrection, righteousness, and conquests of Christ, to the destruction of the Jews, and conversion of the Gentiles. In a word, the Psalm, it is apprehended, should now be considered as a glorious epinikion, or triumphal hymn, to be sung by the church, risen and victorious in Christ her Head.

1. *I will love thee, O* LORD, *my strength.*

Let us suppose king Messiah, like his illustrious progenitor of old, seated in peace and triumph upon the throne designed and prepared for him. From thence let us imagine him taking a retrospect view of the sufferings he had undergone, the battles he had fought, and the victories he had gained. With this idea duly impressed upon our minds, we shall

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be able, in some measure, to conceive the force of the words, "אֶרְחָמְךָ, with all the yearnings of affection I will love thee, O Jehovah, my strength, through my union with whom, I have finished my work, and am now exalted to praise thee, in the name of a redeemed world." Whenever we sing this Psalm, let us think we are singing it in conjunction with our Saviour, newly risen from the dead; a consideration which surely will incite us to do it with becoming gratitude and devotion.

2. *The* LORD *is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation,* and *my high tower.*

In other words, explanatory of the figures here made use of, Through Jehovah it is, that I have stood immoveable amidst a sea of temptations and afflictions; he has supported me under my troubles, and delivered me out of them; his protection has secured me, his power has broken and scattered mine enemies; and by his mercy and truth am I now set up on high above them all. How lovely these strains in the mouth of the church militant! How glorious will they be, when sung by the church triumphant! It is observable, that the words, "in whom I trust," or, as the original has it, "I will trust in him," are referred to, in the margin of our English Bible, as quoted from this verse by St. Paul, Heb. ii. 13. If it be so, the reader, by turning to the place, may furnish himself with a demonstration, that in the xviiith, as well as in the xvith Psalm, David speaks in the person of Christ.

3. *I will,* or, *did call upon the* LORD, who *is worthy to be praised; so shall I be,* or, *so was I, saved from mine enemies.*

As the Psalm so evidently throughout is a thanksgiving for past deliverances, the verbs in this verse seem to require the same rendering which is given to them below, at ver. 6. Jehovah is to be "called upon," both in adversity and in prosperity; in the former with the voice of prayer, in the latter with that of praise. "Is any afflicted?" saith St. James, v. 13, "Let him pray. Is any merry? Let him sing Psalms."

4. *The sorrows,* or, *cords, of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men,* or, *Belial, made me afraid.* 5. *The sorrows,* or, *cords, of hell,* or, *the grave, compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me.*

St. Peter, in his sermon on the day of Pentecost, says, when speaking of Christ—"Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it:" Acts, ii. 24. "Now the Hebrew חבל (as Dr. Hammond well observes on that place) signifies two things, a *cord,* or *band,* and a *pang,* especially of women in travail; hence the LXX meeting with the word, Ps. xviii, where it certainly signifies, χοιντα, *cords,* or *bands,* have yet rendered it ωδινες, *pangs;* and from their example here, St. Luke hath used τας ωδινας θανατου, the *pains* or *pangs* of death; when both of the word λυσας, *loosing,* and κρατεισθαι being *holden fast,* do show the sense is *bands,* or *cords.*" From the passage in the Acts, with this learned and judicious remark upon it, we obtain not only the true rendering of the phrase "חבלי מות cords or bands of death," but also something more than an intimation that, in the verses of our Psalm now before us, David speaks of Christ, that the "cords of death," those "bands" due to our sins, "compassed him about, and the floods of Belial," the powers of darkness and ungodliness, like an overwhelming torrent breaking forth from the bottomless pit, "made him afraid," in the day of his agony, when the apprehensions of the bitter cup cast his soul into unutterable amazement, and he beheld himself environed by those "snares" which had captivated and detained all the children of Adam. David, surrounded by Saul and his blood-thirsty attendants, was a lively emblem of the suffering Jesus, and therefore the same description is applicable to both; as the words of the second Psalm, in like manner, celebrate the inauguration of the son of Jesse, and that of the Son of God.

6. *In my distress I called upon the* LORD, *and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears.*

David was in distress; David called upon Jehovah, the God of Israel, who dwelt between the Cherubims in the holy place; and by him the prayer of David was heard. Much greater was the distress of Christ, who likewise, as St. Paul speaks, "in the days of his flesh offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard;" Heb. v. 7, his voice ascended to the eternal temple, his powerful cry pierced the ears of the Father everlasting, and brought salvation from heaven at the time appointed. The church also is distressed upon earth, she crieth, her cries are heard, and will be answered in the day of God.

7. *Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth.*

At this verse the prophet begins to describe the manifestation of divine power in favor of the Righteous Sufferer. The imagery em-

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ployed is borrowed from Mount Sinai, and those circumstances which attended the delivery of the law from thence. When a monarch is angry, and prepares for war, his whole kingdom is instantly in commotion. Universal nature is here represented as feeling the effects of its sovereign's displeasure, and all the visible elements are disordered. The earth shakes from its foundations, and all its rocks and mountains tremble before the majesty of their great Creator, when he ariseth in judgment. This was really the case at the resurrection of our Lord from the dead; when, as the Evangelist informs us, "there was a great earthquake," and the grave owned its inability any longer to detain the blessed body, which had been committed, for a season, to its custody. And what happened at the resurrection of Jesus, should remind us of what shall happen, when the earth shall tremble, and the dead shall be raised, at the last day.

8. *There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it;* or, *fire out of his mouth devoured, with burning coals from before him.*

The farther effects of God's indignation are represented by those of fire, which is the most terrible of the created elements, burning and consuming all before it, scorching the ground, and causing the mountains to smoke. Under this appearance God descended on the top of Sinai: thus he visited the cities of the plain; and thus he is to come at the end of time. Whenever therefore he is described as showing forth his power and vengeance for the salvation of his chosen, and the discomfiture of his enemies, a "devouring fire" is the emblem made choice of, to convey proper ideas of such his manifestations. And from hence we may conceive the heat of his wrath against the adversaries of man's salvation, when by raising his Son Jesus from the dead, he blasted their schemes, and withered all their strength.

9. *He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness* was *under his feet.* 10. *And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly; yea, he did fly on the wings of the wind.* 11. *He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him* were *dark waters* and *thick clouds of the skies.*

Storms and tempests in the element of air are instruments of the divine displeasure, and are therefore selected as figures of it. When God descends from above, the clouds of heaven compose an awful and gloomy tabernacle, in the midst of which he is supposed to reside: the reins of whirlwinds are in his hand, and he directs their impetuous course through the world; the whole artillery of the aërial regions is at his command, to be by him employed against his enemies, in the day of battle and war.

12. *At the brightness* that was *before him, his thick clouds passed, hail* stones *and coals of fire.* 13. *The* LORD *also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hail* stones *and coals of fire.* 14. *Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them.*

The discharge of the celestial artillery upon the adverse powers is here magnificently described. Terrible it was to them, as when lightnings and thunders, hail stones and balls of fire, making their way through the dark clouds which contain them, strike terror and dismay into the hearts of men. Such is the "voice," and such are the "arrows" of the Lord Almighty, wherewith he "discomfiteth" all who oppose the execution of his counsels, and obstruct the salvation of his chosen. Every display and description of this sort, and indeed every thunder-storm which we behold, should remind us of that exhibition of power and vengeance, which is hereafter to accompany the general resurrection.

15. *Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered at thy rebuke, O* LORD, *at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils.*

As the former part of the Psalmist's description was taken from the appearance on Mount Sinai, so this latter part seems evidently to allude to what passed at the Red Sea, when by the breath of God the waters were divided, the depths were discovered, and Israel was conducted in safety through them. By that event was prefigured the salvation of the church universal, through the death and resurrection of Christ, who descended into the lower parts of the earth, and from thence reascended to light and life. The xivth chapter of Exodus, which relates the passage of Israel through the Red Sea, is therefore appointed as one of the proper lessons on Easter Day. And thus we obtain the ideas intended to be conveyed in this sublime but difficult verse, together with their application to the grand deliverance of the true David, in the day of God's power. Indeed it is not easy to accommodate to any part of the history of the son of Jesse those awful, majestic, and stupendous images, which are made use of throughout this whole description of the divine manifestation, from verse 7. But, however this be, most certainly every part of so solemn a scene of terrors forbids us to doubt but that a "GREATER than David is here;" since cres-

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tion scarce affords colors brighter and stronger than those here employed, wherewith to paint the appearance of Jehovah at the day of final redemption.

16. *He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many*, or, *the great, waters.* 17. *He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me: for they were too strong for me.*

For this purpose did God in so wonderful a manner display his power and glory, that he might deliver the sufferer out of his troubles. This deliverance is first expressed metaphorically, by "drawing him out of the great waters," and then plainly, "he delivered me from my strong enemy," &c. The "great waters," in ver. 16, are the same with "the floods of the ungodly," in ver. 4. By these was Messiah, like David, oppressed and overwhelmed for a time; but, like David, he arose at length superior to them all. The "strong enemy" was obliged to give way to a "stronger than he, who overcame him, and took from him his armor in which he trusted, and divided the spoil:" Luke xi. 22.

18. *They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the* LORD *was my stay.* 19. *He brought me forth also into a large place; he delivered me, because he delighted in me.*

The divine mercy is celebrated again and again through this sacred hymn, in a variety of expressions. Innumerable foes "prevented," that is, surrounded, enclosed Christ on all sides, "in the day of his calamity," when the powers of earth and hell set themselves in array against him: but "Jehovah was his stay;" on him he reposed an unshaken confidence; Jehovah therefore supported his steps, and led him on to victory and triumph; from the narrow confines of the grave he translated him to unbounded empire, because he was the son of his love, in whom he delighted.

20. *The* LORD *rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me.* 21. *For I have kept the ways of the* LORD, *and have not wickedly departed from my God.* 22. *For all his judgments* were *before me, and I did not put away his statutes from me.* 23. *I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity*, or, *from iniquities.* 24. *Therefore hath the* LORD *recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his eye-sight.*

Commentators have been much perplexed to account for these unlimited claims to righteousness made by David, and that, long after the matter of Uriah, and towards the close of life. Certain indeed it is, that the expressions, considered as David's, must be confined either to his steadfast adherence to the true worship in opposition to idolatry, or to his innocency with regard to some particular crimes falsely alleged against him by his adversaries. But if the Psalm be prophetical, and sung by the victorious monarch in the person of king Messiah; then do the verses now before us no less exactly than beautifully delineate that all-perfect righteousness wrought by the Redeemer, in consequence of which, he obtained deliverance for himself and his people. For "His" righteousness' sake Jehovah was well pleased, and rewarded with everlasting felicity the unspotted purity of his works: "He" performed an unsinning obedience to every part of the law, and swerved not from its line in a single instance; the rule was ever in his eye, and no temptation could induce him to deviate from its direction; like the light, he passed through all things undefiled, and his garments were white as the lily: therefore a glorious kingdom was given unto him, forasmuch as in him the piercing eye of heaven could discover no blemish at all.

25. *With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt show thyself upright:* 26. *With the pure thou wilt show thyself pure: and with the froward thou wilt show thyself froward:* Heb. *with the perverse thou wilt wrestle*, or, *strive.*

The reason is here assigned why God "recompensed Messiah according to the cleanness of his hands," namely, because he is just, in rendering to every one according to his works. He who is "merciful" to his brethren shall obtain the divine mercy; he who is "upright" in his dealings with others, will have justice done him by the great Judge, against his iniquitous oppressors; he who is "pure" from deceit and hypocrisy in the service of his God, shall experience in himself a faithful and exact performance of the promises which God hath made to such; but the man that is "froward," perverse, and rebellious, must expect to grapple with an arm which will either humble or destroy. See Levit. xxvi. 3, 4, &c. 23, 24, &c. 1 Kings, viii. 32. Prov. iii. 34.

27. *For thou wilt save the afflicted*, or, *lowly, people: but wilt bring down high looks.*

"God resisteth the proud," saith an apostle, "and giveth grace unto the humble:" James, iv. 6. And, indeed, what is the covenant of grace, but a covenant to humble pride, and to exalt humility; what was it,

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but the humility of Christ, that subdued the pride of Satan; and on what does the salvation of every man depend, but on the issue of the contest between these two principles in his heart?

28. *For thou wilt*, or, *dost, light my candle*, or, *lamp: the* LORD *my* GOD *will*, or, *does, enlighthen my darkness.*

An instance of God's favor towards the lowly and afflicted was the salvation vouchsafed to the suffering Jesus, who, like David, after much tribulation and persecution, under which he sunk for a time, even so low as to the grave itself, was exalted to glory and honor. This change of condition is set forth by that of a "lamp," from a state of extinction to one of illumination, darkness being a well known emblem of sorrow and death, as light is the established symbol of life and joy. Remarkable are the words of the Chaldee Paraphrast upon this verse, cited by Dr. Hammond—"Because thou shalt enlighten the lamp of Israel, which is put out in the captivity, for thou art the author of the light of Israel; the Lord my God shall lead me out of darkness into light, and shall make me see the consolation of the age which shall come to the just."

29. *For by thee I have run through*, or, *broken, a troop: and by my God have I leaped over a wall.*

Through the power of his divinity, the Captain of our salvation vanquished the host of darkness, and escaped from the sepulchre, notwithstanding all their precautions to confine him there. Vain is every effort, by whomsoever it is made, against the counsels of omnipotence. And let us reflect, for our comfort, that they who could not prevent the resurrection of Christ, cannot detain the soul of a Christian in sin, or his body in the grave.

30. As for *God, his way* is *perfect: the word of the* LORD *is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him.*

The "way" of God is the course of his proceedings with men, and its "perfection" consists in the equity of those proceedings; the promises made in "the word of Jehovah" to his servants, are "tried" in times of affliction and persecution, as gold in the fire, and found pure from any dross of deceit, or fallibility; he is ever a "shield" to protect "those who trust in him," during their stay here, until he becomes their "exceeding great reward" hereafter. All this he has been to the Head, in order that he may be all this to the members of the church.

31. *For who* is *God, save the* LORD? *Or who is a rock, save our God?*

"Jehovah" alone is the "God," or covenanted Saviour of his people; he is the only "rock," on which they may securely build their hope of heaven. Vain were the idols of the ancient world, Baal and Jupiter; as vain are those of modern times, Pleasure, Honor, and Profit. They cannot bestow content, or make their votaries happy below; much less can they deliver from death, or open the everlasting doors above.

32. It is *God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect.*

In this and the following verses are enumerated the gifts of God to the spiritual warrior, whereby he is armed and prepared for the battle, after the example of his victorious leader. God invests him with "strength," or what the apostle calls "the spirit of might in the inner man," as the loins of a soldier are braced by the military girdle; whence that of St. Paul, "having your loins girt about with truth." He removes every thing that may impede his progress, until he has accomplished his warfare, and finished his course in righteousness, which seems to be what is meant by "making his way perfect."

33. *He maketh my feet like hind's* feet, *and setteth me upon my high places.*

He endueth the affections, which are the feet of the soul, with vigor and agility, to run the way of his commandments, to surmount every obstacle, and, with an activity like that of the swift hart, or the bounding roe, to conquer the steep ascent of the everlasting hills, and gain the summit of the heavenly mountain. St. Paul tells us how the feet must be shod, for this purpose, namely, "with the preparation of the gospel of peace."

34. *He teacheth my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms.*

He communicates a wisdom and a power which nothing can withstand, instructing and enabling the combatant to overcome in the conflict, to seize and render useless the weapons of the adversary. St. Paul puts into the Christian warrior's hand, "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

35. *Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness*, or, *thy afflictions, have made me great.*

The salvation of God is a defence against all temptations, to such as believe in it; whence St. Paul styles this piece of armor, the shield of FAITH, "wherewith," says he, "ye may be able to quench all the fiery darts of the devil." The "right hand" of God must support and sustain us at all times; and the wholesome discipline of the Christian camp, the chastisements and corrections of our heavenly Father, must train us up to true greatness, and prepare us for the kingdom of heaven. The soldiers, like their great Leader,

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must be "made perfect" through "sufferings."

36. *Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that*, or, *and, my feet did not slip.*

In other words, God had opened a free course for him to victory and triumph, and had also endued him with strength to run that course; thus removing the two mischievous effects of sin, which not only precluded the way to heaven, but deprived us of the ability to travel in it.

37. *I have pursued mine enemies, and overtaken them; neither did I turn again till they were consumed.* 38. *I have wounded them that they were not able to rise: they are fallen under my feet.*

If we suppose David in his conquests to have prefigured victorious Messiah, then have we, in these and the subsequent verses, a sublime description of that vengeance which Jesus, after his resurrection and ascension, inflicted on his hardened and impenitent enemies. His wrath "pursued" and "overtook" them, in the day of visitation; nor did it return, till, like a devouring fire, it had "consumed" the prey. The Jews were cast down, "not able to rise," or lift up themselves as a people, being crushed under the feet of the once despised and insulted Nazarene. Let us reflect upon the impotence of our spiritual adversaries, when Jesus declares war against them, and let us beseech him to conquer them in us, as he has conquered them for us.

39. *For thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle; thou hast subdued under me those that rose up against me.* 40. *Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies; that I might destroy them that hate me.*

With the almighty power of the Godhead was Jesus invested, by which all enemies were subdued unto him; the stiff "necks" of his crucifiers were bowed under him, and utter destruction became the portion of those who hated him, and had "sent after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us." So gird us thy soldiers and servants, O Lord Jesu, to the battle, and subdue under us, by the power of thy grace, those that rise up against us, whether they be our own corrupt desires, or the malicious spirits of darkness; so give us, like another Joshua, the "*necks*" of these our enemies, that we may destroy them that hate, and would destroy us.

41. *They cried, but* there was *none to save* them; even *unto the* LORD, *but he answered them not.*

Never was there a more just and lively portrait of the lamentable and desperate state of the Jews, when their calamities came upon them. "They cried, but—none to save!" They had rejected him who alone could save, and who was now about to destroy them. They cried to Jehovah, and thought themselves still his favorite nation; but Jehovah and Jesus were one; so that after putting the latter from them, they could not retain the former on their side. "He answered them not!" It was too late to knock, when the door was shut; too late to cry for mercy, when it was the time of justice. Let us knock, while yet the door may be opened; and not begin to pray, when prayer shall be no longer heard.

42. *Then did I beat them small as the dust before the wind: I did cast them out as the dirt in the streets.*

The nature of that judgment which was executed upon the Jews, cannot be more accurately delineated, than by the two images here made use of. They were broken in pieces and dispersed over the face of the earth by the breath of God's displeasure, like "dust before the wind; and as dirt in the streets, they were cast out," to be trodden under foot by all nations. O that every nation would so consider, as to avoid their crime and their punishment!

43. *Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people*, and *thou hast made me the head of the heathen: a people* whom *I have not known shall serve me.*

If David was delivered from the strivings of the people; if the adjacent heathen nations were added to his kingdom, and a "people, whom he had not known, served him;" how much more was this the case of the Son of David, when he was "delivered," by his resurrection, from the power of all his enemies; when he was made "head of the heathen," of whom, after their conversion, his church was, and to this day is, composed; and when, instead of the rejected Jews, a people to whom before he had not been known, became his servants!

44. *As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me: the strangers shall submit themselves unto me.* 45. *The strangers shall fade away, and be afraid out of their close places.*

"As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me;" hereby is intimated the readiness with which the Gentiles should flow into the church, upon the preaching of the Gospel to them, when the Jews, after having so long and so often heard it, had nailed Christ to the cross, and driven the apostles out from among them. "The strangers shall submit themselves unto me;" the nations who were "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise," either cordially submitted to the sceptre of Christ, or at least dissembled their hostility, and yielded a feigned submission (for so the

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word כחש sometimes;) "the strangers shall fade away;" that is, such of them as set themselves against me, shall find their strength blasted and withered as a leaf in autumn, and shall fall at the sound of my name and my victories; "they shall be afraid out of their close places;" or rather, "they shall come trembling from their strong holds," as places not able to protect them, and therefore they will sue for peace. Such seems to be the import of these two verses, which therefore denote the conquest of Messiah to have been every way complete. And accordingly, in the remaining part of the Psalm, the church, through Christ her Head, blesseth Jehovah for the same

46. *The* LORD *liveth, and blessed* be *my rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted.* 47. It is *God that avengeth me, and subdueth the people under me.* 48. *He delivereth me from mine enemies: yea, thou liftest me up above those that rise up against me; thou hast delivered me from the violent man.*

In other words, "And now, the Lord God omnipotent liveth and reigneth, for ever blessed and exalted, as the God of salvation: by whom I am avenged of those who persecuted me, and am advanced to empire; my enemies are fallen, and my throne is established." Thus we learn to trust in Jehovah without fear, when our enemies are victorious, and to glorify him without reserve, when we are so.

49. *Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O* LORD, *among the heathen, and sing praises unto thy name.*

Remarkable is the manner in which St. Paul cites this verse, Rom. xv. 9. The context runs thus: "Now I say, that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: and that the Gentiles might glorify God, for his mercy, as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name." This verse is by the apostle produced as a proof, that the Gentiles were one day to glorify God, for the mercy vouchsafed them by Jesus Christ. But, according to the letter of the passage, king David only says, that he will give "thanks unto God among the heathen," on account of his own deliverance, and exaltation to the throne of Israel; for upon that occasion we know that he composed and sung the Psalm. This citation brought by St. Paul, cannot therefore be to the purpose for which it is brought, unless the Psalm have a double sense; unless God be glorified in it for the victory and enthronization of Christ, as well as for those of David; and this cannot be, unless the same words which literally celebrate the one, do likewise prophetically celebrate the other; unless David be a figure of Christ, and speak in his person, and in that of his body, the church. While this Psalm is used as a Christian hymn, in the Gentile Christian church, David still continues, as he foresaw he should do, "to give thanks unto Jehovah, to glorify God among the Gentiles," for the mercies of redemption, and to "sing praises unto his name." *

50. *Great deliverance giveth he to his King: and showeth mercy to his Anointed, to David, and to his seed for evermore.*

"Great deliverance giveth he unto his King;" to king David, in saving him from Saul, and his other temporal enemies, and seating him on the earthly throne of Israel; to King Messiah, in rescuing him from death and the grave, and exalting him to an heavenly throne, as Head of the church: "and showeth mercy to his anointed;" to him who was anointed outwardly, and in a figure, with oil; and to him who was anointed inwardly, and in truth, with the Holy Ghost and with power: "to David, and to his seed for evermore;" to the literal David, and to his royal progeny, of whom, according to the flesh, Christ came; and to Christ himself, the spiritual David, the beloved of God, with all those who through faith, become his children, the sons of God, and heirs of eternal life.

FOURTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM XIX.

ARGUMENT.

In the former part of this beautiful Psalm, ver. 1—6, the heavens are represented as the instructors of mankind; the subject, the universality, and the manner of their instructions are pointed out; the glory, beauty, and powerful effects of the solar light are described. The latter part of the Psalm, 7—14, contains an encomium on the word of God, in which its properties are enumerated; and a prayer of the Psalmist for pardoning and restraining grace, and for the acceptance of these and all other his devotions and meditations. From a citation which St. Paul hath made of the 4th verse, it appears, that, in the exposition, we are to raise our thoughts from things natural to things spiritual; we

* "This verse is applied in Rom. xv. 9, to the calling of the Gentiles unto the faith of Christ, and praise unto God *therefore*. By which we are taught, that of *Christ* and *his* kingdom this Psalm is CHIEFLY intended. AINSWORTH.

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are to contemplate the publication of the Gospel, the manifestation of the Light of Life, the Sun of Righteousness, and the efficacy of evangelical doctrine. In this view the ancients have considered the Psalm, and the church hath therefore appointed it to be read on Christmas-day.

1. *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handy work.*

Under the name of "heaven," or "the heavens," is comprehended that fluid mixture of light and air which is every where diffused about us; and to the influence of which are owing all the beauty and fruitfulness of the earth, all vegetable and animal life, and the various kinds of motion throughout the system of nature. By their manifold and beneficial operations, therefore, as well as by their beauty and magnificence, "the heavens declare the glory of God; they point Him out to us, who, in Scripture language, is styled "the glory of God;" by whom themselves and all other things were made, and are upholden; and who is the author of every grace and blessing to the sons of men: "the firmament;" or expansion of the celestial elements, wherever it extends, "showeth his handy work," not only as the Creator, but likewise as the Redeemer of the world. And thus do the heavens afford inexhaustible matter for contemplation and devotion, to the philosopher and to the Christian.

2. *Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge.*

The labors of these our instructors know no intermission, but they continue incessantly to lecture us in the science of divine wisdom. There is one glory of the sun, which shines forth by day; and there are other glories of the moon and of the stars, which become visible by night. And because day and night interchangeably divide the world between them, they are therefore represented as transmitting in succession, each to other, the task enjoined them, like the two parts of a choir, chanting forth alternately the praises of God. How does inanimate nature reproach us with our indolence and indevotion!

3. There is *no speech nor language* where *their voice is not heard.*

Our translators, by the words inserted in a different character, have declared the sense of this passage to be, that there is no nation or language, whither the instruction diffused by the heavens doth not reach. But as the same thought is so fully expressed in the next verse, "Their sound is gone out," &c. it seems most advisable to adhere to the original, which runs literally thus: "No speech, no words, their voice is not heard;" that is, although the heavens are thus appointed to teach, yet it is not by articulate sounds that they do it; they are not endowed, like man, with the faculty of speech; but they address themselves to the mind of the intelligent beholder in another way, and that, when understood, a no less forcible way, the way of picture or representation. So manifold is the wisdom of God; so various are the ways by which he communicates it to men.

4. *Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.*

The instruction which the heavens disperse abroad is universal as their substance, which extends itself in "lines," or rays, "over all the earth;" by this means their "*significant actions" and operations, are every where present, even "to the ends of the world;" and thereby they preach to all nations the power and wisdom, the mercy and loving kindness of the Lord. The apostles' commission was the same with that of the heavens; and St. Paul, Rom. x. 18, has applied the natural images of this verse to the manifestation of the Light of Life, by the sermons of those who were sent forth for that purpose. He is speaking of those Jews who had not obeyed the Gospel. "But I say," argues he, "have they not heard? Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." As if he had said, They must have heard, since the apostles were commanded not to turn unto the Gentiles, till they had published their glad tidings throughout Judea; but the knowledge of him it now become universal, and all flesh has seen the Glory of the Lord; the Light Divine, like that in the heavens, has visited the whole world, as the prophet David foretold, in the xixth Psalm. The apostle cannot be supposed to have made use of this Scripture in a sense of accommodation only, because he cites it among other texts which he produces merely as prophecies. And if such be its meaning, if the heavens thus declare the Glory of God, and this is the great lesson they are incessantly teaching; what other language do they speak than that their Lord is the representative of ours, the bright ruler in the natural world of the more glorious one in the spiritual, their sun of the "Sun of Righteousness?" But of this the following verses will lead us to speak more particularly.

5. *In them hath he set a tabernacle for the*

* מליהם—The verb מלל (whence מלי, words,) is used for expressing the meaning by *signs*. It has this sense, Prov. vi. 13, מולל ברגלו, speaking *with his foot*.

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the sun, which is *as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,* and *rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.*

In the centre of the heavens there is a tent pitched by the Creator for the residence of that most glorious of inanimate substances, the solar light; from thence it issues with tne beauty of a bridegroom, and the vigor of a champion, to run its course, and perform its operations. A tabernacle, in like manner, was prepared for him, who saith of himself, "I am the LIGHT of the world:" John, viii. 12. And as the light of the sun goes out in the morning with inconceivable activity, new and youthful itself, and communicating life and gaiety to all things around it, like a bridegroom, in the marriage garment, from his chamber to his nuptials; so, at his incarnation, did the Light Divine, the promised bridegroom, visit his church, being clad himself, and clothing her with that robe of righteousness which is styled, in holy Scripture, the marriage garment; and the joy which his presence administered, was, like the benefits of it, universal. And as the material light is always ready to run its heavenly race, daily issuing forth with renewed vigor, like an invincible champion still fresh to labor; so likewise did HE rejoice to run his glorious race; he excelled in strength, and his works were great and marvellous; he triumphed over the powers of darkness; he shed abroad on all sides his bright beams upon his church; he became her deliverer, her protector and support; and showed himself able in every respect to accomplish for her the mighty task he had undertaken. What a marvellous instrument of the Most High is the sun at his rising, considered in this view!

6. *His going forth* is *from the end of heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it; and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.*

The light diffused on every side from its fountain, extendeth to the extremities of heaven, filling the whole circle of creation, penetrating even to the inmost substances of grosser bodies, and acting in and through all other matter, as the general cause of life and motion. Thus unbounded and efficacious, was the influence of the Sun of Righteousness, when he sent out his word, enlightening and enlivening all things by the glory of his grace. His celestial rays, like those of the sun, took their circuit round the earth; they went forth out of Judea into all parts of the habitable world, and there was no corner of it so remote as to be without the reach of their penetrating and healing power. "The Lord gave the word, great was the company of those that published it:" Ps. lxviii. 11. It was the express declaration of our Saviour himself, "This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come; Matt. xxiv. 14. And St. Paul affirms, that "the Gospel was come unto all the world, and had been preached to every creature under heaven:" Col. i. 6, and 23. The prophet, therefore, having thus foretold the mission of the apostles, and the success of their ministry, proceeds, in the next place, to describe their "doctrine;" so that what follows is a fine encomium upon the Gospel, written with all the simplicity peculiar to the sacred language, and in a strain far surpassing the utmost efforts of human eloquence.

7. *The law,* or, *doctrine, of the* LORD is *perfect, converting,* or, *restoring, the soul: the testimony of the* LORD is *sure, making wise the simple.*

The word of God, in this and the following verses, has several most valuable properties ascribed to it. It is perfectly well adapted, in every particular, to "convert," to restore, to bring back "the soul" from error to truth, from sin to righteousness, from sickness to health, from death to life; as it convinces of sin, it holds forth a Saviour; it is a means of grace, and a rule of conduct. It giveth wisdom, and by wisdom stability, to those who might otherwise, through ignorance and weakness, be easily deceived and led astray; "it is sure," certain and infallible in its directions and informations, "making wise the simple."

8. *The statutes of the* LORD are *right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the* LORD is *pure, enlightening the eyes.*

To those who study the righteousness of God therein communicated to man, it becometh a never-failing source of consolation and holy joy; the conscience of the reader is cleansed by the blood, and rectified by the spirit of Christ; and such a conscience is a continual feast; "the statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart." The divine word resembleth the light in its brightness and purity by which are unveiled and manifested to the eyes of the understanding, the wonderful works and dispensations of God, the state of man, the nature of sin, the way of salvation, the joys of heaven, and the pains of hell: "the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes."

9. *The fear of the* LORD is *clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the* LORD are *true* and *righteous altogether.*

"The fear of the LORD," which restrains from transgressing that law by which it is bred in the heart, is in its effect a preservative of mental purity, and in the duration both of its effect and its reward eternal; it

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"endureth for ever." "The judgments of the LORD are" not, like those of men, oftentimes wrong and unjust, but all his determinations in his word are "truth and righteousness united" in perfection.

10. *More to be desired* are they *than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey, and the honey-comb.*

What wonder is it, that this converting, instructing, exhilarating, enlightening, eternal, true, and righteous word, should be declared preferable to the riches of eastern kings, and sweeter to the soul of the pious believer, than the sweetest thing we know of is to the bodily taste? How ready we are to acknowledge all this! Yet, the next hour perhaps, we part with the true riches to obtain the earthly mammon, and barter away the joys of the spirit for the gratifications of sense! Lord, give us affections towards thy word in some measure proportioned to its excellence; for we can never love too much what we can never admire enough.

11. *Moreover by them is thy servant warned;* and *in keeping them* there is *great reward.*

The Psalmist here bears his own testimony to the character above given of the divine word; as if he had said, The several parts of this perfect law, hereafter to be published to the whole race of mankind, have been all along my great instructors, and the only source of all the knowledge to which thy servant hath attained; and I am fully assured, that the blessed fruit of them, when they are duly observed, and have their proper effect, is exceeding glorious, even eternal life.

12. *Who can understand* his *errors? Cleanse thou me from secret* faults.

The perfection and spirituality of God's law render it almost impossible for a fallen son of Adam even to know all the innumerable instances of his transgressing it. Add to which, that false principles and inveterate prejudices make us regard many things as innocent, and some things as laudable, which, in the eye of heaven, are far otherwise. Self-examination is a duty which few practice as they ought to do: and he who practices it best, will always have reason to conclude his particular confessions with this general petition, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults!"

13. *Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous* sins, *let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.*

In the preceding verse, David had implored God's pardoning grace, to cleanse him from the secret sins of ignorance and infirmity: in this he begs his restraining grace, to keep him back from presumptuous sins, or sins committed knowingly, deliberately, and with an high hand, against the convictions and the remonstrances of conscience: he prays that such sins might not "have dominion over him," or that he might not, by contracting evil habits, become the slave of an imperious lust, which might at length lead him on to "the great transgression," to rebellion, and final apostasy from God; for he who would be innocent from the "great transgression," must beware of indulging himself in any.

14. *Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O* LORD, *my strength, my redeemer.*

The prophet, having before solicited the justification of his person through grace, concludes with a petition for the acceptance of all his offerings, and more especially of these his meditations, at the hands of that Blessed One, whom he addresses as the author of all good, and the deliverer from all evil; as the "strength," and "Redeemer" of his people.*

PSALM XX.

ARGUMENT.

1—4, the church prayeth for the prosperity of King Messiah, going forth to the battle, as her champion and deliverer; for his acceptance by the Father, and for the accomplishment of his will. 5, 6, 7, she declareth her full assurance of faith, and her resolution to trust in him alone, and not in the arm of flesh. 8, she foreseeth the fall of her enemies, and her own exaltation; and, 9, concludeth with a prayer to the God of her strength.

1. *The* LORD *hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee.*

This may be considered as the address of a people to their king, when he goeth forth to the battle against their enemies. But it is to be regarded, in a more general and useful view, as the address of the church to Christ her king, in "the day of his trouble." She prayeth for the happy accomplishment of his warfare, "through the name of the God of

* If the reader shall have received any pleasure from perusing the comment on the foregoing Psalm, especially the first part of it, he is to be informed, that he stands indebted, on that account, to a Discourse entitled, CHRIST THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD, published in the year 1750, by the late Rev. Mr. GEORGE WATSON, for many years the dear companion and kind director of the author's studies; in attending to whose agreeable and instructive conversation, he has often passed whole days together, and shall always have reason to number them among the best-spent days of his life; whose death he can never think of without lamenting it afresh; and to whose memory he embraces, with pleasure, this opportunity to pay the tribute of a grateful heart.

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Jacob," dwelling in him. And his warfare, though accomplished in his own person, still remaineth to be accomplished in his people, until the last enemy shall be destroyed, and death shall be swallowed up in victory. It is still "the day of trouble;" still "the name of the God of Jacob must defend" the body of Christ.

2. *Send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Sion.*

All help and strength, in the time of danger and sorrow, must be obtained by prayer from the heavenly Sion which is in the Jerusalem above, and from the eternal temple thereon constructed. By this "help and strength," the Captain of our salvation conquered; and the church, with all her sons, must conquer through the same.

3. *Remember all thy offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice.*

As Christ, in the days of his flesh, offered up, not only prayers and tears, but, at length, his own most precious body and blood, the church here prays, that the great propitiatory sacrifice may be had in everlasting remembrance before God, and the merits of it be continually pleaded in arrest of judgment, and accepted for herself and her children.

4. *Grant thee, according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counsel.*

The desire of Christ's heart, and the counsel of his will, was, that he might die for our sins, and rise again for our justification; that the Gospel might be preached, the Gentiles called, the Jews converted, the dead raised, and the elect glorified. That this his "desire might be granted," and this his "counsel be fulfilled," the church of old prayed; and the church now prayeth for the accomplishment of that which yet remains to be accomplished.

5. *We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up* our *banners: the* LORD *fulfil all thy petitions.*

The joy of the church is in the salvation of Christ; and the joy of every individual is in the application of that salvation to himself, and all around him. In the name of Jesus, and under the banner of the cross, the armies of the faithful undertake and carry on all their enterprizes against the world, the flesh, and the devil. The prospect of the glorious fruits of Christ's victory caused the church to redouble her prayers, that he might be heard in his "petitions" for mankind, and might see of the travail of his soul.

6. *Now know I, that the* LORD *saveth his anointed; he will hear him from his holy heaven, with the saving strength of his right hand.*

The assurance of the ancient church was built on the prophecies going before concerning the salvation of Messiah. Our assurance is strengthened by the actual performance of so great a part of the counsel of God. We know that the LORD has "saved his "Anointed;" that his Anointed saveth all, who believe and obey him, from their sins; and therefore, we doubt not, but that, by "the strength of his right hand," or by the excellency of his power, he will finally save them from death, and rescue them from the grave.

7. *Some* trust *in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the* LORD *our God.*

This should be the resolution of every Christian king and people, in the day of battle. And, in the spiritual war, in which we are all engaged, the first and necessary step to victory is, to renounce all confidence in the wisdom and strength of nature and the world; and to remember, that we can do nothing, but in the name, by the merits, through the power, and for the sake of Jesus Christ, our LORD and our GOD.

8. *They are brought down and fallen; but we are risen, and stand upright.*

This was eminently the case, when the pride and power of Jewish infidelity and Pagan idolatry fell before the victorious sermons and lives of the humble believers in Jesus: this is the case in every conflict with our spiritual enemies, when we engage them in the name, the spirit, and the power of Christ; and this will be the case at the last day, when the world, with the prince of it, shall be "brought down, and fall; but we, risen" from the dead, through the resurrection of our Lord, shall "stand upright" in the courts of heaven, and sing the praises of him who getteth us all our victories.

9. *Save,* LORD: *let the King hear us when we call.*

Thus the Psalm concludes, as it began, with a general "Hosanna" of the church, praying for the prosperity and success of the then future Messiah, and for her own salvation in him, her king: who, from the grave and gate of death, was, for this end, to be exalted to the right hand of the majesty in the heavens, that he might hear, and present to his Father, the prayers of his people, "when they call upon him."

PSALM XXI.

ARGUMENT.

THIS is one of the proper Psalms which the church hath appointed to be used on Ascension-day, and wherein, 1—6. she celebrates the victory of her Redeemer, and the glory consequent thereupon; she pro-

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phesies, 7. the stability of his kingdom, and, 8—12. the destruction of the enemies thereof; concluding with a prayer for his final triumph and exaltation; the celebration of which, with everlasting hallelujahs, will be her employment in heaven.

1. *The King shall joy in thy strength, O* LORD; *and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice!*

The joy of Christ himself, after his victory, is in the strength and salvation of Jehovah, manifested thereby. Such ought to be the joy of his disciples, when God hath enabled them to vanquish their enemies, either temporal or spiritual; in which latter case, as they are called kings, and said to reign with Christ, so they are in duty bound to acknowledge that they reign by him: "He that glorieth," whatever the occasion be, "let him glory in the LORD."

2. *Thou hast given him his heart's desire, and hast not withholden the request of his lips.*

The desire of Christ's heart was his own resurrection and exaltation, for the benefit of his church; and now he ever liveth to make "request with his lips," for the conversion and salvation of sinners. Such desires will be granted, and such requests will never be withholden. Let us be careful to frame ours, after that all-perfect model of divine love.

3. *For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness; thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head.*

The Son of God could not be more ready to ask for the blessings, of the divine goodness, than the Father was to give them: and his disposition is the same towards all his adopted sons. Christ, as king and priest, weareth a crown of glory, represented by the purest and most resplendent of metals, gold. He is pleased to esteem his saints, excelling in different virtues, as the rubies, the sapphires, and the emeralds, which grace and adorn that crown. Who would not be ambitious of obtaining a place therein!

4. *He asked life of thee,* and *thou gavest* it *him,* even *length of days for ever and ever.*

The life, asked by Christ, was not a continuance in this valley of tears, but that new and eternal life consequent upon a resurrection from the dead. For thus his petition was granted in "length of days for ever and ever." He died no more; death had no "more dominion over him." Whose disciples then are they that wish only to have their days prolonged upon the earth, forgetful of the life which is hid with Christ in God?

5. *His glory* is *great in thy salvation: honor and majesty hast thou laid upon him.*

What tongue can express the "glory, honor, and majesty," with which the King of righteousness and peace was invested, upon his ascension; when he took possession of the throne prepared for him, and received the homage of heaven and earth! The sacred imagery in St. John's Revelation sets them before our eyes in such a manner, that no one can read the description, whose heart will not burn within him, through impatient desire to behold them. See Rev. ch. iv. vii. xix. xxi. xxii.

6. *For thou hast made him most blessed,* Heb. *set him to be blessings,* for ever: thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance.*

Chrst, by his death and passion, having removed the curse, became the fountain of all blessings to his people, in time and eternity; being himself the blessing promised to Abraham, and the object of the patriarchal benedictions. The joy communicated to the humanity of our Lord, from the divine nature, shall be shed abroad on all his saints, when admitted to view the "countenance of God" in the face of Jesus Christ. Then they shall enter into "the joy of their Lord."

7. *For the King trusteth in the* LORD, *and through the mercy of the Most High he shall not be moved.*

The throne of Christ, as a man, was erected and established, by his trust and confidence in the Father, during his humiliation and passion. Faith in God, therefore, is the way that leadeth to honor and stability. "Look at the generations of old, and see: did ever any trust in the Lord, and was confounded?" Ecclus. ii. 10.

8. *Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies; thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee.*

The same right hand of Jehovah is glorious in power to save his people, and to destroy his enemies; to convert the Gentiles, and to crush the Jews; to exalt the faithful to heaven, and cast down the unbelieving to hell: neither is there any treason against the King of heaven, which shall not be dragged forth into the light, made manifest, judged, and condemned. Let thy hand, O Lord, be upon our sins to destroy them; but upon us, to save us.

9. *Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger: the* LORD *shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them.*

"The time of God's anger" often begins in this life, especially towards the close of it,

* "Nam posuisti eum in secula benedicendum." Houbigant. Compare Gen. xii. 2. Bishop Lowth, in Merrick's Annotations.

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when an evil conscience within, like flame confined in an "oven," torments the sinner, as a prelude to punishments future and unknown, which the "wrath" of God is preparing to inflict on the incorrigible and impenitent. Let us so meditate on this sad scene, that we may have no part in it.

10. *Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth, and their seed from among the children of men.*

A day is coming, when all the "fruits" of sin, brought forth by sinners, in their words, their writings, and their actions, shall be "destroyed;" yea, the tree itself, which had produced them, shall be rooted up, and cast into the fire. The "seed" and posterity of the wicked, if they continue in the way of their forefathers, will be punished like them. Let parents consider, that upon their principles and practices may depend the salvation or destruction of multitudes after them. The case of the Jews, daily before their eyes, should make them tremble.

11. *For they intended evil against thee; they imagined a mischievous device,* which *they are not able* to perform.

Vengeance came upon the Jews to the uttermost, because of their intended malice against Christ. They, like Joseph's brethren, "thought evil against him;" but "they were not able to perform it; for God meant it unto good, to bring it to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive:" Gen. l. 20. So let all the designs of ungodly men against thy church, O Lord, through thy power of bringing good out of evil, turn to her advantage: and let all men be convinced, that no weapon formed against thee can prosper.

12. *Therefore shalt thou make them turn their back,* or, *thou shalt set them as a butt,* when *thou shalt make ready* thine arrows *upon thy strings against the face of them.*

The judgments of God are called his "arrows," being sharp, swift, sure, and deadly. What a dreadful situation, to be set as a mark, and "butt," at which these arrows are directed! View Jerusalem encompassed by the Roman armies without, and torn to pieces by the animosity of desperate and bloody factions within. No farther commentary is requisite upon this verse. "Tremble, and repent," is the inference to be drawn by every Christian community under heaven, in which appear the symptoms of degeneracy and apostasy.

13. *Be thou exalted,* LORD, *in thine own strength; so will we sing, and praise thy power.*

The church concludes with a joyful acclamation to her Redeemer, wishing for his "exaltation in his own strength," as God, who was to be abased in much weakness, as man. We still continue to wish and pray for his exaltation over sin, in the hearts of his people by grace, and finally over death, in their bodies, by his glorious power at the resurrection. The triumph over sin we sing in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, upon earth; that over death, we shall praise with everlasting hallelujahs, in heaven.

FOURTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM XXII.

ARGUMENT.

THIS Psalm, which the church hath appointed to be used on Good Friday, as our Lord uttered the first verse of it when hanging on the cross, consisteth of two parts. The former, 1—21. treateth of the passion; the latter, 22—31. celebrateth the resurrection of Jesus, with its effects. 1, 2. He complaineth of being forsaken; 3—6. acknowledgeth the holiness of the Father, and pleadeth the former deliverances of the church; 6—8. describeth his humiliation, with the taunts and reproaches of the Jews; 9—11. expresseth his faith, and prayeth for help; 12—18. particularizeth his sufferings; 19—21. repeateth his supplications; 22—25. declareth his resolution to praise the Father for his deliverance, and exhorteth his church to do the same; 26—31. prophesieth the conversion of the Gentile world to the faith and worship of the true God.

1. *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* why art thou so *far from helping me,* and from *the words of my roaring?*

Christ, the beloved Son of the Father, when hanging on the cross, complained in these words, that he was deprived, for a time, of the divine presence and comforting influence, while he suffered for our sins. If the master thus underwent the trial of a spiritual desertion, why doth the disciple think it strange, unless the light of heaven shine continually upon his tabernacle? Let us comfort ourselves, in such circumstances, with the thought, that we are thereby conformed to the image of our dying Lord, that sun which set in a cloud, to arise without one.

2. *O my God, I cry in the day-time, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent.*

Even our Lord himself, as man, prayed, "that if it were possible, the cup might pass from him;" but God had ordained otherwise, for his own glory, and for man's salvation. "Day and night," in prosperity and adversity, living and dying, let us not be "silent," but cry for deliverance; always remembering to add, as Christ did, "Nevertheless, not my

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will, but thine be done." Nor let any man be impatient for the return of his prayers, since every petition preferred even by the Son of God himself was not granted.

3. *But thou* art *holy*, O thou *that inhabitest the praises of Israel.**

Whatever befalleth the members of the church, the Head thereof here teacheth them to confess the justice and holiness of God in all his proceedings; and to acknowledge, that whether he exalteth or humbleth his people, he is to be praised and glorified by them.

4. *Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them.*

"Trust" in God is the way to "deliverance," and the former instances of the divine favor are so many arguments why we should hope for the same; but it may not always be vouchsafed, when we expect it. The patriarchs and Israelites of old were often saved from their enemies: the holy Jesus is left to languish and expire under the malice of his. God knows what is proper for him to do, and for us to suffer; we know neither. This consideration is an anchor for the afflicted soul, sure and steadfast.

5. *They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.*

No argument is of more force with God, than that which is founded upon an appeal to his darling attribute of mercy, and to the manifestations of it formerly made to persons in distress; for which reason it is here repeated, and dwelt upon. They who would obtain grace to help, in time of need, must "cry" as well as "trust." The "prayer of faith" is mighty with God, and (if we may use the expression) overcometh the Omnipotent.

6. *But I* am *a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised by the people.*

He who spareth all other men, spared not his own Son; he spared not him, that he might spare them. The Redeemer of the world scrupleth not to compare himself, in his state of humiliation, to the lowest reptile which his own hand had formed, a "worm," humble, silent, innocent, overlooked, oppressed, and trodden under foot. Let the sight of this reptile teach us humility.

7, 8. *All they that see me, laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head*, saying, *He trusted on the* LORD, that *he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.*

This was literally fulfilled, when Messiah hung upon the cross, and the priests and elders used the very words that had been put into their mouths, by the spirit of prophecy, so long before. Matt. xxvii. 41—43. "The chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him."

O the wisdom and foreknowledge of God The infatuation and blindness of man! The same are too often the sentiments of those who live in times, when the church and her righteous cause, with their advocates, are under the cloud of persecution, and seem to sink beneath the displeasure of the powers of the world. But such do not believe, or do not consider, that in the Christian economy, death is followed by a resurrection, when it will appear, that God forsaketh not them that are his, but they are preserved for ever.

9, 10. *But thou* art *he that took me out of the womb; thou didst make me hope*, when I was *upon my mother's breasts. I was cast upon thee from the womb; thou* art *my God from my mother's belly.*

This was eminently the case of Christ, who was the Son of God in a sense in which no other man ever was. But in him we are all children of God by adoption: we are all in the hands of a gracious Providence from the womb; and into those hands must we commend ourselves, when about to depart hence To whom else, then, should we have recourse, for support and consolation, in the day of calamity and sorrow?

11. *Be not far from me, for trouble* is *near; for* there is *none to help me.*

From the foregoing considerations, namely, from the holiness of God, ver. 3, from the salvation vouchsafed to the people of old time, ver. 4, 5, from the low estate to which Messsiah was reduced, ver. 6, 7, 8, and from the watchful care of the Father over him, since his miraculous birth, ver. 9, 10; from all these considerations, he enforceth his petition for help, during his unparalleled sufferings, when "all forsook him, and fled." Let us treasure up these things in our hearts, against the hour when "trouble shall be near, and there shall be none to help;" when all shall forsake us, but God, our consciences, and our prayers.

12, 13. *Many bulls have compassed me: strong* bulls *of Bashan have beset me round. They gaped upon me* with *their mouths*, as *a ravening and a roaring lion.*

From the 11th verse to the 19th the sufferings of the holy Jesus are described, in terms partly figurative, and partly literal. A lamb, in the midst of wild "bulls and lions," is a

* Or, perhaps, as Bishop Lowth renders it, "Thou that inhabitest, תהלות ישראל, the irradiations, the glory of Israel." See Merrick's Annotations on the Psalms, p. 43.

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very lively representation of his meekness and innocence, and of the noise and fury of his implacable enemies. "Bashan" was a fertile country, Numb. xxxii. 4, and the cattle there fed were fat and "strong." Deut. xxxii. 15. Like them, the Jews, in that good land, "waxed fat and kicked," grew proud and rebelled; "forsook God that made them, and lightly esteemed the rock of their salvation." Let both communities and individuals, when blessed with peace, plenty, and prosperity in the world, take sometimes into consideration this flagrant instance of their being abused; with the final consequence of such abuse.

14, 15. *I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint*, or, *sundered: my heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.*

For our sakes Christ yielded himself, like "water," without resistance, to the violence of his enemies; suffering his "bones," in which consisteth the strength of the frame, to be distended and dislocated upon the cross; while, by reason of the fire from above, to the burning heat of which this paschal Lamb was exposed, his heart dissolved and melted away. The intenseness of his passion drying up all the fluids, brought on a thirst, tormenting beyond expression; and, at last, laid him low in the grave. Never, blessed Lord, was love like unto thy love! Never was sorrow like unto thy sorrow! Thy spouse and body mystical, the church, is often, in a degree, conformed unto thee; and as thou wert, so is she in this world.

16. *For dogs have compassed me; the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.*

Our Lord, who compared himself above, ver. 12, to a lamb in the midst of bulls and lions, here setteth himself forth again under the image of a hart, or hind, roused early in the morning of his mortal life, hunted and chased all the day, and in the evening pulled down to the ground, by those who "compassed" and "enclosed" him, thirsting and clamoring for his blood, crying, "Away with him, away with him! crucify him, crucify him!" And the next step was, the "piercing his hands and his feet," by nailing them to the cross. How often, O thou Preserver of men, in thy church, thy ministers, and thy word, art thou thus compassed, and thus pierced!

17. *I may tell all my bones: they look* and *stare upon me.*

The skin and flesh were distended, by the posture of the body on the cross, that the bones, as through a thin veil, became visible, and might be counted;* and the holy Jesus, forsaken and stripped, naked and bleeding, was a spectacle to heaven and earth. Look unto him, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the world!

18. *They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.*

"The soldiers, when they had crucified JESUS, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part, and also his coat; now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the Scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots:" John, xix. 23, 24.

19. *But be not thou far from me, O* LORD: *O my strength, haste thee to help me.*

The circumstances of the passion being thus related, Christ resumes the prayer, with which the Psalm begins, and which is repeated, ver. 10, 11. The adversary had emptied his quiver, and spent all the venom of his malice; Messiah therefore prayeth for a manifestation of the power and favor of Heaven on his side, in a joyful and glorious resurrection. And to a resurrection from the dead every man will find it necessary to look forward for comfort.

20, 21. *Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling† from the power of the dog. Save me from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me*, or, *and hear thou me, from the horns of the unicorns.*

The wrath of God was the "sword," which took vengeance on all men in their representative; it was the "flaming sword," which kept men out of Paradise; the sword, to which it was said, at the time of the passion —"Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts; smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered:" Zech. xiii. 7, Matt. xxvi. 31. The ravening fury of the "dog," the lion," and the "unicorn," or the "oryx," a fierce and untamable creature of the stag kind, is made use of to describe the

* "Qui macilenti sunt, sic habent ossa prominentia, ut facile omnia possint tactu secerni et numerari. David, quatenus hæc ei conveniunt, dicere hoc potuit de se fuga et molestiis emaciato. Sed Christus aptius ita loqui poterat, quod magis emacintus esset, et corpore nudo atque in cruce distento, magis adparerent ossa." Le Clerc, cited by Bishop Lowth, in Merrick's Annotations.

† Heb. יחידתי *my united one.* "May it relate to any thing more than נפש? the human nature united with the Divinity in the person of Christ? Quære." Bishop Lowth, in Merick's Annotations.

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rage of the devil and his instrument, whether spiritual or corporeal. From all these Christ supplicates the Father for deliverance. How great need have we to supplicate for the same, through him!

22. *I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.*

The former part of the Psalm we have seen to be prophetical of the passion. The strain now changes to an epinikion, or hymn of triumph, in the mouth of the Redeemer, celebrating his victory, and its happy consequences. This verse is cited by the apostle, Heb. ii. 11, "Both he that sanctified, and they who are sanctified, are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren," &c. And accordingly, when the deliverance, so long wished, and so earnestly prayed for, was accomplished by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, he "declared the name of God," by his apostles, to all his "brethren;" and caused the church to resound with incessant praises and hallelujahs; all which are here represented as proceeding from the body, by and through him who is the head of that body.

23.* *Ye that fear the* LORD, *praise him: all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel.*

If Christ arose from the dead, to declare salvation to his brethren, and to glorify God for the same, how diligent ought we to be in doing the former; how delighted in the performance of the latter! Messiah first addressed himself to his ancient people, "the seed of Jacob," to whom the Gospel was first preached. How long, O Lord, holy and true, shall thy once highly favored nation continue deaf to this gracious call of thine! "All ye seed of Jacob glorify him: and fear him all ye seed of Israel."

24. *For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard.*

The great subjects of praise and thanksgiving, in the church, are the sufferings of the lowly and afflicted Jesus, and the acceptance of those sufferings by the Father, as a propitiation for the sins of the world; which acceptance was testified by raising him from the dead; inasmuch as the discharge of the surety proved the payment of the debt. The poor and afflicted brethren of Christ may take comfort from this verse; for if they suffer in his spirit, they will be raised in his glory.

25. *My praise* shall be *of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him.*

The vow of Christ was, to build and consecrate to Jehovah a spiritual temple, in which the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise should be continually offered. This vow he performed, after his resurrection, by the hands of his apostles, and still continueth to perform, by those of his ministers, carrying on the work of edification in "the great congregation" of the Gentile Christian Church. The vows of Christ cannot fail of being performed. Happy are they whom he vouchsafeth to use, as his instruments, in the performance of them.

26. *The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the* LORD *that seek him: your heart shall live for ever.*

A spiritual banquet is prepared in the church for the meek and lowly of heart; the bread of life and the wine of salvation are set forth in the word and sacraments; and they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, shall be "satisfied" therewith: they, "who seek" the Lord Jesus in his ordinances, ever find reason to "praise him;" while, nourished by these noble and heavenly viands, they live the life, and work the works of grace, proceeding still forward to glory; when their "heart shall live for ever," in heaven.

27. *All the ends of the world shall remember, and turn unto the* LORD: *and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.*

The great truths of man's creation and fall, with the promise of a Redeemer to come, were "forgotten" by the nations, after their apostasy from the true God, and the one true religion; but were, as we may say, recalled to their "remembrance" by the sermons of the apostles, and the writings of Moses and the prophets, translated and spread among them. By these they were converted to the faith, and now compose the holy church universal throughout the world; being the glorious proofs and fruits of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

28. *For the kingdom* is *the* LORD'S: *and he is the governor among the nations.*

There is good reason why the nations should worship Christ, and throw away their idols; since in his hands, not in theirs, is the government of the world. Upon his ascension he was crowned King of kings, and Lord of lords; he ruleth in the church by his Spirit; and blessed are the hearts, that

* Bishop Lowth is of opinion, that this verse and the following are the "song" of praise, which, in the verse preceding, the speaker says, he will utter "in the congregation." The introduction of it, as his lordship justly observes, gives a variety to the whole, and is highly poetical. Merrick's Annotations.

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are his willing subjects in the day of his power.

29. *All* they that be *fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul.*

It was said above, ver. 26. "the meek," the poor, and lowly, "shall eat and be satisfied." It is here foretold that the "fat ones of the earth," the great, the opulent, the flourishing, the nobles and princes of the world, should be called in to partake of the feast, and to "worship" God. Rich, as well as poor, are invited;* and the hour is coming, when all the race of Adam, as many as sleep in the "dust" of the earth, unable to raise themselves from thence, quickened and called forth by the voice of the Son of man, must "bow" the knee to King Messiah.

30. *A seed shall serve him: it shall be accounted to the* LORD *for a generation.*

The apostle informeth us, Rom. ix. 8. that "the children of the promise are counted for the seed;" that is, the converts to be made, among the nations, by the preaching of the Gospel, according to the promise to Abraham; these were to constitute the church and family of Christ, the "generation" of the faithful; these were to take the place, and enjoy the privileges of the Jews, cut off because of their unbelief. Lord, enable us to serve thee all our lives, with a service acceptable to thee in Christ Jesus; that at the resurrection of the just, we may be numbered in the generation of thy children.

31. *They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done* this.

The promised and expected race shall spring forth at the time appointed, and proclaim the "righteousness," which is of God by faith, to ages and generations yet unborn; who, hearing of that great work, which the Lord shall have wrought, for the salvation of men, will thereby be led to glorify him in the church, for the same to the end of time.

Rise, crown'd with light, imperial Salem rise!
Exalt thy tow'ring head, and lift thy eyes!
See a long race thy spacious courts adorn;
See future sons, and daughters yet unborn,
In crowding ranks, on ev'ry side arise,
Demanding life, impatient for the skies!
See barb'rous nations at thy gates attend,
Walk in thy light, and in thy temple bend.

MESSIAH.

PSALM XXIII.

ARGUMENT.

IN this Psalm, the "sheep of God's pasture" address themselves to their great and good SHEPHERD, declaring, 1, their acquiescence and confidence in him; 2, his diligence in feeding them with the food of eternal life; 3, his watchful care in bringing them back from the ways of error, and conducting them in the path of truth; 4, his power in saving them from death; 5, his loving kindness in vouchsafing his spiritual comforts, during their pilgrimage in an enemy's country; and, 6, they express their hope and trust, that a continuation of that loving kindness, will enable them to pass through the vanities and vexations of time, to the blissful glories of eternity.

1. *The* LORD *is my Shepherd, I shall not want.*

In these words, which one cannot utter without feeling the happiness they were intended to describe, the believer is taught to express his absolute acquiescence and complacency, in the guardian care of the great Pastor of the universe, the Redeemer and Preserver of men. With joy he reflects, that he hath a "Shepherd;" and that that Shepherd is JEHOVAH; one possessed of all the qualities requisite to constitute the pastoral character in the highest perfection. For where shall we ever find such unexampled diligence, such inexpressible tenderness, such exquisite skill, such all-subduing might, and such unwearied patience? Why should they fear, who have such a friend? How can they "want," who have such a "Shepherd?" Behold us, O Lord Jesu, in ourselves hungry, and thirsty, and feeble, and diseased, and defenceless, and lost. O feed us, and cherish us, and heal us, and defend us, and bear with us, and restore us!

2. *He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.*

The loveliest image afforded by the natural world, is here represented to the imagination; that of a flock, feeding in verdant meadows, and reposing, in quietness, by the rivers of

* They are "invited," but they do not so often accept the invitation. And it must be owned, that רשׁבי ארץ, are generally mentioned in an unfavorable sense. Bishop Lowth is therefore rather inclined to construe the words, as Mr. Fenwick does; all who are "fattened," that is, "fed" and sustained by the "earth." The expression then intimates the universality of the Gospel, which, the apostle says, "was preached to EVERY CREATURE;" a phrase of similar import. All who would partake the benefits of Christ's passion, must worship him as a Saviour, before they are called upon to adore him as a Judge. The bishop thinks, likewise, that the 29th verse should end with the words, "bow before him;" that the next words in the original should be read, as almost all the ancient versions seem to have read them, ונפשׁי לו תחיה, and rendered—"But my soul shall live—My seed shall serve him," &c.

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water, running gently through them. It is selected, to convey an idea of the provision made for the souls, as well as bodies of men, by His goodness, who openeth his hand, and filleth all things living with plenteousness. By me," saith the Redeemer, "if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture:" John, x. 9. And what saith the Spirit of peace and comfort? "Let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely:" Rev. xxii. 17. Every flock that we see, should remind us of our necessities; and every pasture should excite us to praise that love by which they are so bountifully supplied.

3. *He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.*

To "restore," or bring back, those that had "gone astray," that is, in other words, to "call sinners to repentance," was the employment of Him who, in the parable of the "lost sheep," representeth himself as executing that part of the pastoral office. By the same kind hand, when "restored," they are thenceforth led in "the path of righteousness;" in the way of holy obedience. Obstructions are removed; they are strengthened, to walk and run in the path of God's commandments; while, to invite and allure them, a crown of glory appears, held forth at the end of it. All this is now done, for, in, by, and through, that "name," beside which, there is none other under heaven given unto man, whereby he may be saved.

4. *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou* art *with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*

The sheep here express their confidence in the power of their Shepherd, as sufficient to defend them against the last and most formidable enemy, death himself. To apprehend the scenery in this verse, we must conceive the church militant, and the church triumphant, as two mountains, between which lieth the "valley of the shadow of death," necessary to be passed by those who would go from one to the other. Over all that region of dreariness and desolation, extendeth the empire of the king of terrors: and the believer alone "feareth no evil," in his passage through it; because he is conducted by "that great Shepherd of the sheep, whom God brought again from the dead:" Heb. xiii. 20, and who can therefore show us the path of life, through the vale of death. In all our dangers and distresses, but chiefly in our last and greatest need, let "thy rod," the sceptre of thy kingdom, O Lord, protect us, and thy pastoral "staff" guide and support our steps; till, through the dreaded valley, we pass to the heavenly mountain, on which St. John saw "the Lamb standing, with a great multitude, redeemed from the earth." Rev. xiv. 1.

5. *Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.*

Another set of images, borrowed from a "feast," is introduced, to give us ideas of those cordials and comforts prepared to cheer and invigorate the fainting soul, while, surrounded by "enemies," it is accomplishing its pilgrimage through life; during which time, its sorrows and afflictions are alleviated and sweetened by the joys and consolations of the Holy One; by the feast of a good conscience; by the bread of life, the "oil" of gladness, and the "cup" of salvation, still full, and "running over."

6. *Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the* LORD *for ever.*

Experience of "goodness and mercy," already so often vouchsafed, begets an assurance of their being continued to the end; for nothing can separate us from the love of Christ, if we do not separate ourselves from it. Thus will the Lord, our Saviour, provide for us on earth, and conduct us to heaven; where we shall dwell to "length of days," even the days of eternity, "one fold under one Shepherd:" a fold into which no enemy enters, and from which no friend departs; where we shall rest from all our labors, and see a period to all our sorrows; where the voice of praise and thanksgiving is heard continually; where all the faithful, from Adam to his last-born son, shall meet together, to behold the face of Jesus, and to be blessed with the vision of the Almighty; where "we shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on us, nor any heat. But the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed us, and lead us to living fountains of waters." Rev. vii. 16, 17.

FIFTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM XXIV.

ARGUMENT.

THE plan of this Psalm, according to the letter of it, is beautifully delineated by Bishop Lowth, in his xxviith lecture. The Ark of God is supposed to be moving, in a grand and solemn procession of the whole Israelitish nation, towards the place of its future residence, on Mount Sion: see 1 Chron. xv. On ascending the mountain, the Psalm is sung, declaring, 1, 2, the sovereignty of

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Jehovah over all the earth; describing, 3—6, what the character ought to be of that people whom he had more peculiarly selected, to serve him in the house where his Glory was to dwell, and of which, 7—10, it was now about to take possession. All this is by us to be applied to the Christian church, and the ascension of our Lord into heaven; for which reason, the Psalm is one of those appointed to be used on Ascension-day.

1. *The earth* is *the* LORD'S, *and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.*

The God of Israel was Lord of the whole earth, by right of creation. The same Divine Person who created the world, hath since, in Christ, redeemed it; and it is his again, by that right also. But the church Christian is his, in a more peculiar manner, as the church of Israel formerly was. We are doubly bound to adore and to obey him. "It is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves:" Psal. c. 2, and "we are not our own, being bought with a price:" 1 Cor. vi. 20. The inference is, "Let us glorify God in our bodies, and in our spirits, which are," every way, "God's."

2. *For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods.*

The waters which, at the creation, and again at the deluge, overspread all things, being, by the power of God, driven down into the great deep, and there confined, the earth was, in a wonderful manner, constructed and established, as a circular arch, upon or over them. Let us often meditate on this noble subject for contemplation and devotion; that we may learn whither we are to have recourse, when in danger of being overwhelmed by sins or sorrows.

3. *Who shall ascend into the hill of the* LORD? *and who shall stand in his holy place?*

The connection seems to be this: If the Almighty Creator and Lord of all the earth has chosen us to be his peculiar people, to serve and worship him in his temple, upon the holy hill of Sion, whither the sacred symbol of his presence is now ascending, what manner of persons ought we to be? The reasoning is exactly the same, as Bishop Lowth observes, with that of Moses, in Deut. x. 14—16. "Behold the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord's thy God; the earth also, with all that therein is. Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers, to love them; and he chose their seed after them, even you, above all people, as it is this day. Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked." The argument applies, with additional force, to ourselves, as Christians. We compose a far more numerous and magnificent procession than that of the Israelites, when the church universal, with her spiritual services, attends our Lord, as it were, upon his ascension, in heart and mind ascending with him into the holy places not made with hands.

4. *He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity*, or, *placed his trust in vain idols*, or, *in the creature, nor sworn deceitfully.* 5. *He shall receive the blessing from the* LORD, *and righteousness from the God of his salvation.*

No man can ascend into heaven through his own righteousness, but he who came down from heaven, and performed a perfect sinless obedience to the will of God. Sinners of old were purified, through faith in him that was to come, by typical offerings and ablutions, before they approached the sanctuary. We have been cleansed from our sins, and renewed unto holiness, by the blood of Christ, and the washing of the Holy Ghost. Thus we become his people: thus we "receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of our salvation."

6. *This* is *the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob*, or, *O God of Jacob.*

Such ought the people to be who seek the presence of God, and approach to worship him in the sanctuary; who celebrate the ascension of their Redeemer, and hope, one day, to follow him into those happy mansions, which he is gone before to prepare for them.

7. *Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in.* 8. *Who* is *the King of Glory? The* LORD *strong and mighty, the* LORD *mighty in battle.* 9, 10. The chorus is repeated.

We must now form to ourselves an idea of the Lord of Glory, after his resurrection from the dead, making his entry into the eternal temple in heaven; as of old, by the symbol of his presence, he took possession of that figurative and temporary structure which once stood upon the hill of Sion. We are to conceive him gradually rising, from Mount Olivet, into the air, taking the clouds for his chariot, and ascending up on high; while some of the angels, like the Levites in procession, attendant on the triumphant Messiah in the day of his power, demand that those everlasting gates and doors, hitherto shut and barred against the race of Adam, should be thrown open, for his admission into the realms of bliss. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in." On hearing this voice of jubilee and exultation

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from the earth, the abode of misery and sorrow, the rest of the angels, astonished at the thought of a MAN claiming a right of entrance into their happy regions, ask from within, like the Levites in the temple, "Who is this King of Glory?" To which question the attendant angels answer, in a strain of joy and triumph—and let the church of the redeemed answer with them—"The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle;" the LORD JESUS, victorious over sin, death, and hell. Therefore we say, and with holy transport we repeat it, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in." And if any ask, "Who is the King of Glory?" to heaven and earth we proclaim aloud—"The LORD of Hosts;" all conquering MESSIAH, Head over every creature, the Leader of the armies of JEHOVAH, "He is the King of Glory." Even so, Glory be to thee, O Lord Most High! Amen. Hallelujah.

PSALM XXV.

ARGUMENT.

IT is much the same, whether we suppose the church, or any single member thereof, to be speaking throughout this Psalm, and praying, 1—3, for help and protection against spiritual enemies; 4, 5, for knowledge and direction in the way of godliness; pleading for this purpose, 6, 7, God's mercies of old; 8, the perfections of his nature; 9, 10, enumerating the qualifications requisite for scholars in the divine school; 11, upon the strength of these arguments, enforcing the petition for mercy; 12—14, describing the blessedness of the man who feareth the Lord; 15—21, preferring divers petitions; and, 22, closing the whole with one for the final redemption of the Israel of God.

1. *Unto thee, O* LORD, *do I lift my soul.* 2. *O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed; let not mine enemies triumph over me.*

Cares and pleasures are the weights which press the soul down to earth, and fasten her thereto; and it is the spirit of prayer which must enable her to throw off these weights, to break these cords, and to "lift up" herself to heaven. He who "trusteth" in any thing, but in God, will one day be "ashamed" and confounded, and give his spiritual "enemies" cause "to triumph over him."

3. *Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without a cause,* or, *vainly, rashly.*

God, as a father and a master, will never suffer his children and servants to want his favor and protection; nor will he permit malicious rebels to enjoy it. Honor will, in the end, be the portion of the former, and shame the inheritance of the latter.

4. *Show me thy ways, O* LORD; *teach me thy paths.* 5. *Lead me in thy truth, and teach me; for thou* art *the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.*

We are travellers to heaven, who, through temptation, are often drawn aside, and lose our way. The way is the law of God; and, to keep that law, is to walk in the way. God only can put us in the way, and preserve and forward us therein; for which purpose, we must continue instant in prayer to "the God of our salvation," that he would "teach" us to DO his will; that so we may not be ashamed and confounded.

6. *Remember, O* LORD, *thy tender mercies, and thy loving kindnesses; for they* have been *ever of old.*

The soul, when hard beset with sins and sorrows, is apt to think that God hath forsaken and forgotten her. In this case, she cannot more effectually prevail upon him, or comfort herself, than by recollecting, and, as it were, reminding him of former mercies; since, however the dispositions and affections of men may alter, God is always the same.

7. *Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me, for thy goodness' sake, O* LORD.

When God remembers his mercy, he forgets our sins; and when he forgets our sins, he remembers his mercy; for what else is his mercy but the forgiveness, the blotting-out, the non-imputation of sin? Who, that has lived long in the world, can survey the time past of his life, without breaking forth into this petition, adding, to "the sins of his youth," the many transgressions of his riper years?

8. *Good and upright* is *the* LORD: *therefore will he teach sinners in the way.*

Another argument for hope and trust in God, is drawn from his "nature." He hates sin, and loves righteousness; he sent his Son to suffer for the one, and his Spirit to produce the other; and he cannot but be faithful and just to his own gracious promises, which all centre in the salvation of sinners by pardon and grace, through Him who is "the way, the truth, and the life."

9. *The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.*

Pride and anger have no place in the school of Christ. The Master himself is "meek and lowly of heart;" much more, surely, ought the scholars to be so. He who hath no sense of his ignorance, can have no

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desire or capability of knowledge, human or divine.

10. *All the paths of the* LORD are *mercy and truth, unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.*

The law of God is the way by which he cometh to us, as well as that by which we go to him; and all the different dispensations of that law, here styled the "paths of the Lord," are composed of "mercy and truth;" mercy promising, and truth performing, meet together in Christ, who is "the end of the law to every one that believeth;" to such as "keep his covenant and his testimonies."

11. *For thy name's sake O* LORD, *pardon mine iniquity; for it is great.*

The pardon of sin is to be asked, and obtained, through that gracious "name," in which "mercy and truth are met together;" and so "great" is our sin, that pardon can be had only through that name.

12. *What man is he that feareth the* LORD? *Him shall he teach in the way* that *he shall choose.*

The blessings consequent upon "the fear of the Lord" are such as will justify the earnestness and fervor of the foregoing petitions for pardon and grace. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." He who hath it, will "choose" the right way, and will be "taught" to go therein.

13. *His soul shall dwell at ease,* Heb. *lodge in goodness: and his seed shall inherit the earth.*

It is a privilege of "the man who feareth the Lord," that not only in this present life, all things work together for his "good;" but his soul, after having persevered in righteousness, shall take up its abode in the mansions of felicity. His "seed" likewise shall be blessed in the same manner, with such a portion of the temporal promise made to Abraham as God seeth best for them, and certainly with an abundant share in the spiritual inheritance, the NEW earth, wherein dwell righteousness, joy, and glory. "Blessed are the meek, the seed of Christ, for they shall inherit the earth:" Matt. v. 5.

14. *The secret,* Heb. *fixed counsel,* or, *design, of the* LORD, *is with them that fear him: and he will show them his covenant,* Heb. *and his covenant, to make them know it.*

The greatest happiness of man in this world is, to know the fixed and determinate counsels of God concerning the human race, and to understand the covenant of redemption. This likewise is the reward of "the fear of the Lord," which humbles the soul, and prepares it for divine illumination, causing it to place all its comfort in meditation on the wonders of heavenly love. "All things which I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you," saith our Lord to his disciples: John, xv. 15.

15. *Mine eyes* are *ever toward the* LORD; *for he shall pluck my feet out of the net.*

Encouraged to hope for the blessings above mentioned, the lowly suppliant still continues to fix the eyes of his understanding on their proper object, God his Saviour, beholding his glory, attending to his will, and expecting his mercy. An unfortunate dove, whose feet are taken in the snare of the fowler, is a fine emblem of the soul, entangled in the cares or pleasures of the world; from which she desires, through the power of grace, to fly away, and to be at rest, with her glorified Redeemer.

16. *Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I* am *desolate and afflicted.*

They who are looking unto the Lord will be heard, when they beseech him to turn his face, and to look upon them. When the soul, forsaking and forsaken by all earthly supports and comforts, finds herself in a state of desolation, and is experimentally convinced of her being, not in a paradise of delights, but in a vale of misery, then her visitation and deliverance are at hand.

17. *The troubles of my heart are enlarged: O bring thou me out of my distresses.*

As life is prolonged, troubles are generally enlarged,* till at length they take up what room there is in the heart. The last scene of the tragedy is the most calamitous. So it was in the life of our dear Master. And every man will sooner or later perceive, that God alone can "bring him out of his distresses."

18. *Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins.*

Affliction and pain, whether of mind or body, are the fruits of sin; and the pardon of sin is the first step towards the removal of sorrow. The latter is sent to beget in us a due sense of the former, in order to a deliverance from both. In the new earth "dwelleth righteousness;" and, for that reason, "there is no more sorrow, pain, nor crying." 2 Pet. iii. 13. Rev. xxi. 4.

19. *Consider mine enemies, for they are many; and they hate me with cruel hatred.*

As the evils we suffer are great, so the enemies we have to encounter are many. Their name is "legion;" and to their envy, hatred, and malice, there are no bounds. How

* Bishop Lowth, with some slight alteration of the text, thinks the rendering should be,

Coarctationes cordis mei dilata;
Et ex angustiis meis educ me.
See Merrick's Annotations.

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unequal the combat, unless thou, O God, goest forth with us by thy grace, "conquering and to conquer!"

20. *O keep my soul, and deliver me: let me not be ashamed; for I have put my trust in thee.*

Preservation from sin, and deliverance from death, are two great gifts of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. For the latter clause, see ver. 2.

21. *Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on thee.*

How many wishes do our hearts send forth after riches, honors, and pleasures! how few after "integrity and uprightness!" yet these can "preserve" us, and those cannot. Absolute integrity and uprightness are the prerogatives of the King of righteousness; and it is his grace which makes us such as his mercy will accept. On him therefore let us "wait."

22. *Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.*

In the common salvation all have an interest; and, for that reason, all should pray for it. The earthly David petitioned for Israel; the heavenly David ever continued to intercede for the church; and every Christian ought to become a suppliant for his brethren, still looking and longing for that glorious day, when, by a joyful resurrection unto life eternal, God shall indeed "redeem Israel out of all his troubles."

PSALM XXVI.

ARGUMENT.

THE party speaking in this Psalm, whether we suppose it to be the typical, or the true David, the church, or any member thereof, lying under the false accusations of calumny, 1, 2, 3, appealeth to God in behalf of injured innocence; 4, 5, disclaimeth all connection with wicked men; 6, 7, 8, declareth a fixed resolution to adhere to the worship of God in the church; 9, 10, prayeth to be delivered from the ungodly; 11, again protesteth integrity, and, 12, determineth to praise the Lord.

1. *Judge me, O* LORD, *for I have walked in mine integrity; I have trusted also in the* LORD; therefore, *I shall not slide.*

We have here an appeal to God, in behalf of injured and calumniated innocence. This was the case of David, with regard to the accusations of Saul; of Christ, with regard to those of the Jews; and it is often the case of the church, and of good men in the world; for whose use this Psalm seems peculiarly calculated.

2. *Examine me, O* LORD, *and prove me; try my reins and my heart.*

A trial of this sort might be desired by David, and may be desired by men, like him, conscious of their integrity, as to the particular crimes charged upon them by the malice of their enemies. Christ alone could ask such a trial at large, as being equally free from every kind and degree of sin; and certain of receiving additional lustre from the increasing heat of the furnace.

3. *For thy loving kindness is before mine eyes: and I have walked in thy truth.*

They who study, in order to copy, the "loving kindness" and the "truth" of God, may have confidence towards him, whose "truth" will not suffer him to be false to the promises, which his "loving kindness" prompted him to make.

4. *I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers* 5. *I have hated the congregation of evil doers; and will not sit with the wicked.*

David, driven by Saul into a land of aliens, yet preserved himself from the contagion of idolatry. And happy the Christian who can say, that, during the time of his banishment and pilgrimage, he hath escaped the pollutions that are in the world, namely, vanity and hypocrisy, evil practices, and wicked principles. Christ alone, like his emblem the light, passed through all things undefiled.

6. *I will wash mine hands in my innocency; so will I compass thine altar, O* LORD: 7. *That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works.*

Instead of consorting with the heathen, David comforts himself with the future prospect of restoration to Jerusalem; of attending the service of God in the tabernacle; of performing the legal ablutions, in token of innocency thereby signified; and of singing, before the holy altar, psalms of praise for his deliverance. The believing soul, in like manner, may find perpetual consolation, while she looks forward toward her return home, from her exile in the world, to the Jerusalem above; her access to the fountain of life and purity; her employment of serving God in the eternal temple; and chanting forth, with angels and archangels, the new songs of the celestial Sion, for so great salvation.

8. LORD, *I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honor dwelleth*, Heb. *the place of the tabernacle of thy glory.*

With what ardent affection the banished prophet sighs for the beauty of holiness in the church! the most amiable object on earth, because the nearest resemblance of heaven,

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where is the true "habitation of God's house, and the place of the tabernacle of his glory;" since of the heavenly Jerusalem St. John tells us, that the "Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple." Rev. xxi. 22.

9. *Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men:* 10. *In whose hands is mischief, and their right hand is full of bribes.*

In consideration of his integrity and piety, David beseeches God not to deliver him over into the hands of his unjust and bloody enemies, nor to reckon him in their number. Let our lot, O Lord, be among thy children here, that it may be among them hereafter.

11. *But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity: redeem me, and be merciful unto me.*

The Christian's resolution, like that of the prophet, must be, to hold fast his "integrity" in the midst of his enemies, and not follow a multitude to do evil; as knowing, that the day of final "redemption and mercy" will come.

12. *My foot standeth in an even place; in the congregations will I bless the* LORD.

The law of God is that "even place," that plain and direct path, in which the affections, which are the "feet" of the soul, must be immoveably fixed, so that nothing may induce her to swerve from the stability of her purpose, to the right hand, or to the left. David, upon his return to his country, "blessed the Lord in the congregation" of Israel, by singing psalms of praise and thanksgiving; and by the constant use of those very psalms, the Lord is daily "blessed" in all Christian "congregations" throughout the world; yea, and he shall be so blessed to the end of time.

FIFTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM XXVII.

ARGUMENT.

THIS Psalm containeth, 1—3, a declaration of trust and confidence in Jehovah, amidst the dangers and tumults of war; 4, a longing desire of restoration to the city and house of God; 5, 6, a triumphant assurance of final victory and exultation; 7—12, earnest prayer for support and protection; 13, a profession of faith, and its mighty power and comfort in affliction; 14, an exhortation to patience.

1. *The* LORD *is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The* LORD *is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?*

God is our "light," as he showeth us the state we are in, and the enemies we have to encounter, he is our "strength," as he enableth us, by his grace, to cope with, and overcome them; and he is our "salvation," as the author and finisher of our deliverance from sin, death, and Satan. All this he was to the blessed person whom David represented; and all this he will be to his faithful servants. "If God," therefore, "be for us, who can be against us?" Rom. viii. 31.

2. *When the wicked,* even *mine enemies and my foes came upon me, to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.*

The past time is often used, in the prophetical language, to intimate the certainty of the future. Faith sees the foe already vanquished, and the prey snatched from the jaws of the devouring lion.

3. *Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this* will *I* be *confident.*

What avails it, that the "host" of darkness is in arms, and the world taking the field against us, when the LORD is our light, and heaven our ally?

4. *One* thing *have I desired of the* LORD, *that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the* LORD *all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the* LORD, *and to inquire in his temple.*

The victories of David ended in his restoration to Jerusalem, and the service of God: the victories of Christ terminated in his triumphant return to a better Jerusalem; and this ought to be the "one thing desired" by the Christian, that, after his conquest over the body of sin, he may pass the unnumbered days of eternity in the courts of heaven, contemplating the beauty and glory of his Redeemer.

5. *For in the time of trouble, he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.*

The protection and consolation experienced by believers of the church militant, give them a taste of the loving kindness of the Lord, and make them impatiently desirous of quenching their thirst at the fountain of divine pleasures, after they shall have been exalted upon the ROCK of ages, from whence the fountain flows.

6. *And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the* LORD.

These words, as they are supposed to be spoken by David, by Christ, or by the church, express their respective assurances, through faith, of final victory over their several ene-

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mies, with their determined resolution of singing hallelujahs to Jehovah, for the same.

7. *Hear, O* LORD, when *I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me.*

From the assurances of faith it is always good to descend to the humiliation of prayer to God, who alone can grant unto us that one thing which we desire and long after, while in the land of our captivity, and house of our pilgrimage. See ver. 4.

8. When thou saidst, *Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face,* LORD, *will I seek.*

The voice of God, throughout the Scriptures, exhorteth the believer to turn away from the delusive appearances of the creature, and to seek after Him who is "altogether lovely," until he behold "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." To this voice the believer answers, like a well-tuned instrument to the master's touch, declaring his resolution so to do.

9. *Hide not thy face* far *from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; l ave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation!*

The suppliant, having determined to seek the face of God, here prayeth that he would permit himself to be found, and to be seen; and that he would not, by "hiding his face," cause the light of knowledge to become darkness, and the fire of charity to go out. The church dreadeth nothing so much as an eclipse of the "Sun of righteousness."

10. *When my father and my mother forsake me, then the* LORD *will take me up.*

A time will come when the dearest earthly friends and relations can no longer be of any assistance to us.* The case of the church and of the soul is oftentimes compared to that of a poor, helpless, exposed orphan. Where worldly comforts end, heavenly ones begin. See Isa. xlix. 15; Matt. xxiii. 37, John, ix. 35.

11. *Teach me thy way, O* LORD, *and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.*

The child of God, learning to walk in the law of his heavenly Father, prayeth to be directed and strengthened from above, that the enemy may neither pervert his steps nor triumph in his fall.

12. *Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty.*

* As there seems to be some difficulty in supposing the Psalmist's parents to have "deserted" him, they might perhaps be said to have "forsaken" him, (as Muis conjectures,) that is, to have left him behind them, as being dead. MERRICK.

David had his enemies and false accusers; Christ also had his; and every child of God hath need to petition for deliverance from the great enemy of his salvation, the grand accuser of the brethren, who is ever breathing out malice and cruelty against the body and members of Christ.

13. I had fainted, *unless I had believed to see the goodness of the* LORD *in the land of the living.*

"Faith" in the comfortable promises of God is the only sovereign cordial for a "fainting" spirit. Earth is the land of the dying; we must extend our prospect into heaven, which is the land of the "living," where the faithful shall "see," and experience evermore "the goodness of the LORD."

14. *Wait on the* LORD: *be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the* LORD.

The person speaking concludes with an apostrophe to his own soul, resulting from the confidence in God, expressed ver. 1, from the desire and the hope of heaven, 4—13, and from the manifold pledges of the divine love already received in this life; 14, the proper inference from all which considerations is this: that we should patiently "wait on the Lord," till the few and evil days of our pilgrimage pass away, and we arrive at the mansions prepared for us, in the house of our Heavenly Father; till our warfare be accomplished, and terminate in the peace of God; till the storms and tempests of wintry time shall give place to the unclouded calm, and the ever-blooming pleasures of eternal spring.

PSALM XXVIII.

ARGUMENT.

THIS Psalm, like the xxiid and many others, consisteth of two parts. For, 1—5, the true David appeareth in his state of humiliation and suffering; he prayeth for deliverance, and prophesieth the destruction of his enemies. 6—9, he singeth a sweet, though short, hymn of triumph, and intercedeth for his church and people.

1. *Unto thee will I cry, O* LORD, *my rock; be not silent to me: lest,* if *thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit.*

The true David here maketh supplication, "with strong crying," to the Father, that he may not be suffered to continue, like other men, under the dominion of the "grave." The Christian prayeth, in the same words, to be delivered from the "pit" of corruption; and mightily should he "cry" to Jehovah,

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the "rock" of his salvation, until his prayer is, heard and answered.

2. *Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto thee, when I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle.*

Christ frequently interceded for his people, with his "hands lifted up" toward "heaven," in fervent prayer: and—"I will," saith the apostle, "that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands;" 1 Tim. ii. 8. Shall our Redeemer pray for us, and shall we not pray for ourselves?

3. *Draw me not away with the wicked, and with the workers of iniquity, which speak peace to their neighbors, but mischief is in their hearts.*

Christ, who alone is without sin, petitioneth that he may not be oppressed by sinners; he who is truth and love prayeth to be preserved from the "false and malicious." Let us pray to be made like him; and, like him, to be delivered from evil, especially from the evil of a "lying and slandering" tongue.

4. *Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavors; give them after the work of their hands; render to them their desert.* 5. *Because they regard not the works of the* LORD, *nor the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up.*

In these verses, as indeed in most of the imprecatory passages, the imperative and the future are used promiscuously; "Give them—render them—he shall destroy them." If, therefore, the verbs, in all such passages, were uniformly rendered in the "future," every objection against the Scripture imprecations would vanish at once, and they would appear clearly to be what they are, namely, prophecies of the divine judgments, which have been since executed against the Jews, and which will be executed against all the enemies of Jehovah and his Christ, whom neither the "works" of creation, nor those of redemption, can lead to repentance.

6. *Blessed* be *the* LORD, *because he hath heard the voice of my supplications.* 7. *The* LORD is *my strength and my shield: my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth: and with my song will I praise him.*

The scene now changes from the humiliation and sufferings, to the glory and triumph of Christ, our Head, who, through the power of the Divinity, having overcome his enemies, may be supposed, at his resurrection from the dead, to have sung this strain; a strain which they who have been delivered from sin and sorrow, will best understand by using it.

8 *The* LORD is *their strength, and he is the saving strength of his Anointed*, or, *Christ.*

He who saved and exalted the Head, will also save and exalt the members; or, as St. Paul expresseth it, "if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you: he that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit, that dwelleth in you:" Rom. viii. 11. And for the accomplishment of this glorious salvation, the salvation of his church, the Redeemer intercedeth in the remaining verse of this Psalm.

9. *Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also and lift them up for ever.*

9. Save us, O Lord Jesu, from our sins; bless us, O thou Son of Abraham, with the blessing of righteousness; feed us, O thou good Shepherd of the sheep; and lift us up for ever from the dust, O thou, who art the resurrection, and the life!

PSALM XXIX.

ARGUMENT.

IN this Psalm, the prophet, 1, 2, calleth the kings of the earth to give glory to Jehovah, and to the VOICE, or WORD, of his power; the effects of which, in the world and in the church, are most magnificently described; the same things being true of thunder and lightning in the former, and of the Word of God in the latter; as each of them is styled, the "Voice of the LORD;" and both, 3, 4, are mighty in operation; both, 5, rend, and, 6, 7, shake, and, 8, pierce, and melt, and, 9, make manifest. The Psalm concludes with, 10, an acknowledgment of the extent and glory of God's kingdom, and, 11, a promise of victory and peace through him.

1. *Give unto the* LORD, *O ye mighty, give unto the* LORD *glory and strength.* 2. *Give unto the* LORD *the glory due unto his name: worship the* LORD *in the beauty of holiness.*

The prophet addresseth himself to the "mighty" ones of the earth, exhorting them to "give" God the "glory," and to submit themselves to the kingdom of Messiah, to honor that holy "name," by which they must be saved; to bow before his altars, "by whom kings reign;" and to cast down their crowns at the foot of the eternal throne.

3. *The voice of the* LORD *is upon the waters; the* GOD *of glory thundereth; the* LORD *is upon many waters.*

The reason why the mighty are exhorted to serve Jehovah is, because of his wondrous works in the world, and in the church. By the "voice," or, "word," of God, the "waters" were driven down into the deep,

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and forbidden to overflow the earth any more; by the voice of God, the tumultuous and raging nations subsided, and the church was immovably fixed upon the rock of her salvation; and by the Gospel of the "God of glory," all those effects were produced in the hearts of men, which are wrought upon terrestrial substances, by its well known and most significant emblem in the material heavens.

4. *The voice of the* LORD *is powerful; the voice of the* LORD *is full of majesty.*

Of the power and majesty of God's voice, when he speaketh from heaven in thunder, few hearts are insensible; of the power and majesty of his voice, when he spoke from heaven by his apostles, those "sons of" the spiritual "thunder," the world was once fully sensible. O may the evangelical "Boanerges" so cause the glorious sound of the Gospel to be heard, under the whole heaven, that the world may again be made sensible thereof; before that voice of the Son of Man, which hath so often called sinners to repentance, shall call them to judgment!

5. *The voice of the* LORD *breaketh the cedars: yea, the* LORD *breaketh the cedars of Libanus.*

The force of lightning is known to rend in pieces the tallest and strongest trees in a moment; nor is the word of God less effectual in bringing down the loftiest pride, and rending the hardest heart of man, by the Spirit which accompanieth it. Thus was the persecuting Saul humbled and converted, by a "light" and a "voice" from "heaven;" so that, instead of "breathing out threatenings and slaughters," he asks, like a meek and dutiful child, "Lord, what wilt thou have to do?" Acts, ix. 1. 6.

6. *He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn.*

Thunder not only demolisheth the cedars, but "shaketh the mountains" on which they grow. Thus by the Gospel, "every mountain and hill was shaken, and made low; every high thing, which exalted itself against the knowledge of Christ, was cast down, and brought into subjection:" Isa. xl. 4.; 2 Cor. x. 5.

7. *The voice of the* LORD *divideth the flames of fire.*

By the power of God, the "flames of fire" are "divided" and sent abroad from the clouds upon the earth, in the terrible form of lightning, that sharp and glittering sword of the Almighty, which no substance can withstand. The same power of God goeth forth by his word, "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword," penetrating, melting, enlightening, and inflaming the hearts of men; Acts, ii. 3.; Heb. iv. 12.

8. *The voice of the* LORD *shaketh the wilderness; the* LORD *shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.*

The wilderness of Kadesh was a part of that wilderness through which the Israelites passed, in their way to Canaan; see Numb. xiii. 26. Thunder shaketh those wide extended deserts, as well as Lebanon and Sirion, mountains of Judea. The Gospel was first preached in Palestine, but from thence it went forth into the Gentile world, that dry, barren, and desolate "wilderness." The wilderness is yet once again to be shaken by "the voice of God," and to be removed for ever, that paradise may succeed in its place.

9. *The voice of the* LORD *maketh the hinds to calve,* or, *the oaks to tremble,* and discovereth the forests; and in his temple doth every one speak of his glory.*

Storms of thunder and lightning, attended often with whirlwinds, strip the trees of their leaves and bark, and disclose the recesses of forests. It is by the "word of God," that the hidden "things of darkness are manifested," and the "counsels of all hearts revealed:" for "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do:" 1 Cor. iv. 5. Heb. iv. 13. For these his marvellous works, in the natural and spiritual world, God is daily "glorified" in the "church."

10. *The* LORD *sitteth upon the flood; yea, the* LORD *sitteth a King for ever.*

The Lord Jesus sitteth on his throne, having all power in the dispensations of nature and of grace; by which, as he checketh at pleasure the rage of the most boisterous elements in the former, so, with the same ease, he controlleth the fury of the enemy and oppressor in the latter; saying, with equal authority in both cases, PEACE! BE STILL!

11. *The* LORD *will give strength unto his people; the* LORD *will bless his people with peace.*

From Jehovah, whose power and majesty have been with so much sublimity displayed in this whole Psalm, we are to expect, through faith and prayer, "strength" to overcome our enemies, whether ghostly or bodily; and also the blessing of "peace," which must be the fruit of victory. Thou, O Christ, art the "Mighty God;" and, therefore, thou art the "Prince of Peace." Isa. ix. 6.

* So Bishop Lowth renders the clause in his Lectures. Aristotle, Plutarch, and Pliny, as cited by Mr. Merrick, mention the case of abortion being sometimes caused among cattle by thunder. Whatever terrifies to any degree, may certainly produce such an effect. But the bishop's interpretation is, in every respect, the most eligible. The evident connection with the words that follow—"discovereth the forests,"—forbids us to doubt of its being right.

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SIXTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM XXX.

ARGUMENT.

IN this Psalm, or devout hymn, composed probably by David, on his revisiting the sanctuary, after a joyful recovery from some dangerous sickness, he, 1—3, returneth thanks for that event; and, 4, calleth the church to do so likewise, 5, drawing a comparison between temporary sufferings and eternal rewards. 6, 7, he describeth his former prosperity succeeded by affliction, with, 8—10, the supplications poured forth to the Almighty, in the day of his distress; and then returneth again, 11, to celebrate his deliverance, and, 12, to glorify God for the same. The Psalm is finely adapted to the case of the true David, and of Christians, his disciples and followers.

1. *I will extol thee, O* LORD; *for thou hast lifted me up,* Heb. *drawn me out, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me.*

These words, if originally composed and uttered by king David, on occasion of some temporal mercy, apply, in a far more emphatical and beautiful manner, to the case of Messiah, suffering and rising again, as well as to that of his church and people, following him, both in his sufferings and resurrection; when we shall all lift up our voices, and sing together—"I will magnify thee, O Lord, for thou hast lifted me up! and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me!"

2. *O* LORD *my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me.*

Deliverance is to be attained by "prayer;" for so David, and so the Son of David, obtained it; the former was "healed," at his restoration to health and strength; the latter at the resurrection: the soul is healed at its repentance and conversion; and the body will hereafter be repaired, beautified, and glorified, from the ruins of the grave.

3. *O* LORD, *thou hast brought up my soul,* or, *animal frame, from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.*

The resurrection of David was a figurative one; that of Christ was a real one, as that of his saints will be; so that the Psalm is more strictly applicable to the true, than it ever could have been to the typical David. The latter clause may be rendered—"Thou hast quickened me from among them that go down to the pit;" which rendering is most agreeable to the former part of the verse—"Thou hast brought up my frame from the grave."

4. *Sing unto the* LORD, *O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness,* or, *of his Holy One.*

The church of the redeemed is called upon to glorify the name of God, for his remembrance of "the King of Saints," and for the accomplishment of the promise in raising him from the dead.

5. *For his anger* endureth but *a moment; in his favor* is *life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy* cometh *in the morning.*

This is a most beautiful and affecting image of the sufferings and exaltation of Christ; of the sorrows and joys of a penitent; of the miseries of time, and the glories of eternity; of the night of death, and the morning of the resurrection.

6. *And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved.* 7. LORD, *by thy favor thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: thou didst hide thy face,* and *I was troubled.*

David, after his success against Goliath, and Christ, upon his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, were hailed by the acclamations and hosannas of the people, as the Christian may sometimes meet with the applause of the world, and be led to think himself established in prosperity. But other troubles awaited David; and the blessed Jesus was nailed to the cross. Let not the disciple expect to be above his master; nor, in the season of life and joy, neglect to prepare for the approaching days of sorrow and darkness.

8. *I cried unto thee, O* LORD; *and unto the* LORD *I made supplication.* 9. *What profit* is there *in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? Shall it declare thy truth?* 10. *Hear, O* LORD, *and have mercy upon me:* LORD, *be thou my helper.*

These are some of "the strong cryings and supplications," which the true David poured forth, while under the cloud of his passion; and which are to be poured forth by us, when conformed to his image, in suffering affliction. The argument here used, is a very powerful one, namely, the necessity of a resurrection from the grave, that man may be saved, and God glorified. The dead cannot praise, or serve God. They must live again for this purpose; and for this purpose it is, that we should desire to live, whether it be in the present world, or that which is to come.

11. *Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth and girded me with gladness.*

This might be true of David, delivered from his calamity; it was true of Christ, arising from the tomb, to die no more; it is true of the penitent, exchanging his sackcloth for the garments of salvation; and it will be verified in us all, at the last day, when we shall put off the dishonors of the grave, to shine in glory everlasting.

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12. *To the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent: O* LORD *my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.*

The end of Christ's resurrection, of the salvation of the souls of the faithful, and the resurrection of their bodies, is one and the same, namely, the glory of God, who is the author of every kind of deliverance; whose praise should, therefore, be resounded by the grateful tongues of the redeemed, from generation to generation; as the tongue then becometh the "glory" of man, when it is employed in setting forth the glory of God.

PSALM XXXI.

ARGUMENT.

IN this Psalm, ver. 5th of which was pronounced by our Lord, when expiring on the cross, we hear the true David, like his representative of old, 1—6, supplicating for deliverance; 7, 8, rejoicing in the divine favor and assistance; 9—13, describing his afflicted and forlorn state; 14—18, returning again to his prayers; 19—22, celebrating the mercies of God to the children of Adam; and, 23, 24, exhorting his saints to courage and perseverance, under their troubles in the world.

1. *In thee, O* LORD, *do I put my trust, let me never be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness.*

God is faithful and just, to save those who, in time of trouble, renouncing all dependence on themselves and the creature, "put their trust" only in his mercy. His honor is engaged by his promise, not to let such be "ashamed" of their confidence.

2. *Bow down thine ear to me, deliver me speedily: be thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me.*

The Christian, like his blessed Master, is "besieged" by many and powerful enemies, insomuch that, notwithstanding all human precautions, "unless Jehovah keep the city, the watchman waketh in vain." Who, in such circumstances, would not pray for "speedy" deliverance?

3. *For thou* art *my rock and my fortress: therefore, for thy name's sake, lead and guide me.*

God will be the "rock" and "fortress" of those who esteem him as such; and, after having been so, through all the dangers and difficulties of life, he will "lead" and "guide" them to the realms of peace and rest, for the sake of that "name" which implieth salvation.

4. *Pull me out of that net which they have laid privily for me: for thou* art *my strength.*

As David prayed for an escape from the secret conspiracies that were entered into against him, so did Christ pray for deliverance from the snares of death; and so doth the Christian pray to be extricated from the toils both of sin and death.

5. *Into thine hand I commend my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O* LORD, *thou God of truth.*

David, in his distresses, might, by these words, express his resignation of himself and his affairs into the hands of God; but it is certain, that Christ actually did expire upon the cross, with the former part of this verse in his mouth: Luke, xxiii. 46. Nor is there any impropriety in the application of the latter part to him; since, as man, the surety and representative of our nature, he was "redeemed" from the power of the enemy, by "the God of truth" accomplishing his promises.

6. *I have hated them that regard lying vanities: but I trust in the* LORD.

They may hope for redemption, who so "trust in God," as to trust in nothing beside him; for all else is "vanity," and will deceive.

7. *I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy, for thou hast considered my trouble: and hast known my soul in adversities:* 8. *And hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy; thou hast set my feet in a large room.*

The considerations that make the soul "cheerful" in the hour of affliction, are, that God is merciful; that as he is not ignorant, so neither is he unmindful of our troubles; that he is a friend, who "knows" us in adversity, no less than in prosperity; that he hath not subjected us to the necessity of being overcome by our spiritual enemies; but hath, "with the temptation, made a way for us to escape."

9. *Have mercy upon me, O* LORD, *for I am in trouble: mine eye is consumed with grief,* yea, *my soul,* or, *animal frame, and my belly.*

Upon the strength of the foregoing considerations, supplication is here made for deliverance from troubles, which wasted the eyes with weeping, and exhausted the strength and vigor of the frame. Such were the troubles of David, and, more emphatically, those of Christ; and sickness and sorrow will one day teach us all to use the same expressions.

10. *For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed.*

Do we not, in these words, hear the voice of the "man of sorrows," suffering, not

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indeed for his own "iniquity," but for ours, of which he frequently, in the Psalms, speaks as if it were his own? If sin was punished in the innocent Lamb of God, let us not expect that it should be unpunished in us, unless we repent; and let our punishment never fail to remind us of our guilt.

11. *I was a reproach among all mine enemies; but especially among my neighbors, and a fear to mine acquaintance; they that did see me without, fled from me.*

These particulars were never more applicable to David, than they were to the Son of David, when his acquaintance, at beholding him reviled by his enemies, were terrified from attending him, and when "all the disciples forsook him, and fled." The same things are often too true of the faith and the church. They are true likewise of every man, when he suffers the dishonors of the last enemy, death; when he is "a fear" to his dearest friends, and they are obliged to forsake him.

12. *I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind; I am like a broken vessel.*

This was literally the case of Christ, when laid in the sepulchre, and esteemed no longer the object of hope by his friends, or of fear by his enemies. That he should be so "forgotten," while dead, is less wonderful, than that this should have happened since his glorious resurrection and ascension into heaven.

13. *For I have heard the slander of many; fear* was *on every side, while they took counsel together against me; they devised to take away my life.*

The slander of Shimei, and the counsel of Ahithophel against King David, direct us to the slanders of the Jews, and the counsels of Judas and the Sanhedrim against the beloved Son of God, who, in his church, will be persecuted in like manner, by the ungodly, to the world's end.

14. *But I trusted in thee, O* LORD: *I said, thou* art *my God.* 15. *My times* are *in thy hand; deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.* 16. *Make thy face to shine upon thy servant: save me for thy mercies' sake.*

In all our afflictions, after the example of the typical, and of the true David, we are to have recourse to the prayer of faith; we are to consider, that Jehovah is our God and Saviour; that the times and the seasons of prosperity and adversity, of life and death, are in his hand; and therefore on him we are to wait, till the day of mercy shall dawn, and the shadows fly away.

17. *Let me not be ashamed, O* LORD, *for I have called upon thee; let the wicked be ashamed,* and *let them be silent in the grave.* 18. *Let the lying lips be put to silence; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.*

Ahithophel, for his treason against David, and Judas, for his treachery against Christ, felt the force of this prophetical imprecation, or prediction, which will also, one day, take its full effect, in the confusion of all impenitent calumniators and traitors.

19. O *how great* is *thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee;* which *thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee, before the sons of men.*

Peace of conscience, the comforts of the Spirit, and the hope of future glory, will teach the soul, even in the darkest night of affliction, to break forth into this exulting strain of gratitude and praise, for the blessings experienced by those who confess their Saviour before men.

20. *Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride,* Heb. *conspiracies of man; thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.*

In times of contention and persecution, there is a refuge for the faithful in "the tabernacle of David," which is the mystical body of Christ, inhabited by the presence of God. In this sacred "pavilion," they enjoy the pleasures of contemplation and devotion, regardless of the distant tumult and confusion of the world.

21. *Blessed* be *the* LORD: *for he hath showed me marvellous kindness in a strong city.*

The man Christ, and the church with him, like David of old, here rejoice in the protection and saving power of God, in the same manner as in Isa. xxvi. 1. "We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks."

22. *For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes; nevertheless, thou heardest the voice of my supplications, when I cried unto thee.*

Whoever shall consider the troubles of the beloved Son of God, bereaved for a season of the light of heaven, only that it might afterwards arise upon him with the greater lustre, will be taught never to faint under the chastisement of the Lord; since the darkness of the night argues the approaching dawn of the day.

23. *O love the* LORD, *all ye his saints:* for *the* LORD *preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.* 24. *Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the* LORD.

The exhortation is raised from the consideration of the deliverance of Christ, with the destruction of his enemies; which ought to

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strengthen and comfort the hearts of believers, under all their afflictions here below; that so, after having suffered courageously with their Master, they may triumphantly enter into his joy and glory.

SIXTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM XXXII.

ARGUMENT.

In this Psalm, which is the second of those styled penitential, David, as a model of true repentance, 1, 2, extolleth the blessedness of those whose sins are forgiven them; 3. 4, describeth the torment endured by him, before he confessed his sin; and, 5, the goodness of God in pardoning it, when confessed; 6, he foretelleth that others, after his example, should obtain the like mercy; 7, declareth his hope and confidence in his God; who, 8, is introduced, promising wisdom and grace to the penitent; 9, 10, sinners are warned against obstinacy; and, 11, the righteous exhorted to rejoice in God their Saviour.

1. *Blessed* is he whose *transgression* is *forgiven*, whose *sin* is *covered*. 2. *Blessed* is *the man unto whom the* LORD *imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit* there is *no guile.*

As the sick man is eloquent in the praise of health, so the sinner beginneth this his confession of sin with an encomium on righteousness, longing earnestly to be made a partaker of the evangelical "blessedness;" to be delivered from the guilt and the power of sin; to be pardoned and sanctified through faith which is in Christ Jesus. See Rom. iv. 6.

3. *When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.*

In opposition to the blessedness abovementioned, the penitent now proceeds to declare his own wretched estate, occasioned by his "keeping silence," or not confessing his sin, which therefore rankled and festered inwardly, occasioning torment inexpressible. The disorders of the mind, as well as those of the body, should be communicated to persons skilful in assuaging and removing them. Many might thereby be saved from the horrible crime of self-murder, which is generally committed in agonies of solitary remorse and despair.

4. *For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer.*

Outward calamities, and inward pangs of conscience, are the strokes of God's hand, designed to humble the sinner, and lead him to confession: and in the infliction of these, such severity is sometimes necessary, that the patient is brought to death's door, before a turn can be given to the disease; but the pain of a blow upon an ulcerated part, however exquisite, is well compensated for, if, by promoting a discharge, it effect a cure.

5. *I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have not I hid; I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the* LORD; *and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.*

What is this, but the Gospel itself—"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins:" 1 John, i. 9. And thus it happened, in one case, to David, who had no sooner confessed his sin to the prophet Nathan, but an answer of peace was instantly vouchsafed—"The LORD hath put away thy sin:" 2 Sam. xii. 13. Were angels to descend from heaven, to comfort the dejected spirit of a sinner, they could say nothing more effectual for the purpose, than what is said in this verse of our Psalm. But practice will be the best comment upon it.

6. *For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found; surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.*

Encouraged, by this example and declaration of David, to hope for mercy, on confession of sin, it is here foretold, that humble penitents shall be led to make their prayer unto God in the acceptable time, and in the day of salvation, while he "may be found;" that so they may be forgiven, and preserved from great and overwhelming calamities; from the fears of death, and the terrors of judgment.

7. *Thou* art *my hiding place, thou shalt preserve me from trouble: thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.*

The penitent, happily returned to the house of his heavenly Father, now esteemeth himself safe under his protection and resteth in full assurance that all his sorrows shall one day be turned into joy, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

8. *I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way in which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.*

The Redeemer is here introduced, returning an answer to the penitent's declarations of his humility and faith; promising "instruction" in that wisdom which every man wants who continues in sin, together with the direction of the Spirit in the way of righteousness, and the superintendence of his watchful care. Man cannot prevent evils, because he cannot foresee them. "Next therefore to the protecting power of God's Wing, is the securing prospect of his Eye," saith Dr. South.

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9. *Be ye not as the horse*, or, *as the mule*, which *have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.*

The person speaking in the former verse, or the prophet himself, exhorts sinners to repent, at the invitation and encouragement afforded them; and not to continue, like brutes, fierce, obstinate, and senseless, until, like them, they must be tamed and managed by force, and the severity of discipline.

10. *Many sorrows* shall be *to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the* LORD, *mercy shall compass him about.*

They who are not to be reformed by gentler methods, must learn righteousness under the rod of affliction, in the school of the cross; and happy they, if their "sorrows" may so turn to their advantage. But happier are those who, led by the goodness of God to repentance and faith, enjoy the light and protection of "mercy."

11. *Be glad in the* LORD, *and rejoice ye righteous: and shout for joy, all* ye that are *upright in heart.**

In the beginning of the Psalm, the penitent, smitten with a sense of his wretchedness on account of his sins, extolleth the blessedness of the righteous! he now again doth the same, through a joyful sense of his pardon, and restoration to that happy state. Let us "rejoice," O Lord Jesu; but let us rejoice "in thee," and in thy salvation; so shall we rejoice indeed!

PSALM XXXIII.

ARGUMENT.

IN this Psalm, the prophet, 1—3, exhorteth the faithful to a spiritual and holy joy in their God, whom they are to praise, 4, 5, for his truth, righteousness, and mercy; 6—9, for his power, displayed in the works of creation; 10—19, for the wisdom of his providence, and the care he hath of his people. 20, 21, The righteous, in answer to the exhortation, declare their joy and confidence in God their Saviour, and, 22, prefer a petition for his manifestation.

1. *Rejoice in the* LORD, *O ye righteous, for praise is comely for the upright.*

* Bishop Lowth is of opinion, this verse should be the first of the ensuing Psalm, the repetition being in the very style and manner of the Hebrews, and the words repeated and varied with the greatest art and elegance. "Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous; and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart. Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; for praise is comely for the upright." See Merrick's Annotations.

God, and not the world, is the fountain of "joy," which sinners talk of, but the righteous only possess. "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice:" Philip. iv. 4.

2 *Praise the* LORD *with harp: sing unto him with psaltery*, and *an instrument of ten strings.*

Music, both vocal and instrumental, is of eminent use in setting forth the praises of God; but there is no instrument like the rational soul, and no melody like that of well-tuned affections. When this music accompanies the other, the sacred harmony of the church is complete.

3. *Sing unto him a new song; play skilfully with a loud noise.*

"Old things are passed away," and the ideas of a Christian are to be transferred from the old world, and the old dispensation, to the "new; since, under the Gospel, "all things are become new," and all men ought to become so: Rev. xxi. 1. 5. Abilities of every kind are never so well employed, as in the service of him who giveth them.

4. *For the word of the* LORD *is right: and all his works are done in truth.*

God is to be praised for his word and his works; for his rectitude in the one, and his truth in the other; for his faithfulness in accomplishing by the latter, what his goodness had promised in the former. The sense will be the same, if we suppose that by the "word of the Lord" is meant the personal WORD, or Son of God, all whose "works" wrought for the salvation of men, are done in truth, as witnessed by the law and the prophets.

5. *He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness*, Heb. *mercy, of the* LORD.

"Justice" is an attribute inseparable from God; and what deserves the praises of man, as it excites the admiration of angels, is, that, without sacrificing this formidable attribute, he hath contrived to fill and overflow the earth with his "mercy."

6. *By the word of the* LORD *were the heavens made: and all the host of them by the breath*, or, *spirit, of his mouth.*

It is true, that the world was created by the "word," or *fiat* of God, which may be here described, after the manner of men, as formed by "the breath of his mouth." It is also true, that by the instrumentality of the eternal WORD, and the eternal SPIRIT, the old heavens and earth were made; as also the new heavens and earth which shall succeed them. Glory is due from man to God, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit.

7. *He gathereth the waters of the sea to-*

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gether, as an heap: he layeth up the depth in store houses.

The next instance of divine power and goodness, for which we are here excited to be thankful, is that of laying up the waters, which originally covered the face of the earth, in the great depth beneath. And let us reflect, that, by the same divine power and goodness, a deluge of wickedness and violence is prevented from overwhelming the faith and the church.

8. *Let all the earth fear the* LORD: *let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him:* 9. *For he spake, and it was* done; *he commanded, and it stood fast.*

He who made all things, who preserves all things, and can in a moment destroy all things, is the proper object of our "fear;" and that we fear him so little, is a most convincing proof of the corruption and blindness of our hearts.

10. *The* LORD *bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect.* 11. *The counsel of the* LORD *standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.*

The wisdom of God's providence is not less worthy of adoration than the power of his might. By this wisdom the "counsels" of states and empires are either directed to the accomplishment of the great counsel of heaven; or, if they attempt to thwart it, are blasted, and "brought to nothing." History will force all, who read it with this view, to acknowledge thus much. And with this view, indeed, it should always be read.

12. *Blessed is the nation whose God is the* LORD; and *the people* whom *he hath chosen for his own inheritance.*

The foregoing considerations of the righteousness, truth, mercy, power, and wisdom, of Jehovah, naturally suggest a reflection on the "blessedness" of the church, in whose cause all those attributes are, by the covenant of grace, engaged and exercised. But who now esteems this blessedness as it deserves?

13. *The* LORD *looketh from heaven: he beholdeth all the sons of men.* 14. *From the place of his habitation, he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth.* 15. *He fashioneth their hearts alike; he considereth all their works.*

How great must be the advantage of living in his favor, and under his protection, who, from the watch-tower of his eternal throne, beholdeth, directeth, and controlleth at pleasure, not only the actions and the words, but the very thoughts and imaginations of all the inhabitants of the earth! For, this being the case, it is most certain, that,

16. *There is no king saved by the multitude of an host; a mighty man is not delivered by much strength.* 17. *An horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver* any *by his great strength.*

All the power in the world is less than nothing, if brought into the field against that of God; so that the fate of every battle will depend upon the side which he shall please to take, who is equally able to confound the many and the mighty, and to give victory to the weak and the few. The same is true of that spiritual warfare in which we are all engaged.

18. *Behold, the eye of the* LORD is *upon them that fear him; upon them that hope in his mercy.* 19. *To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.*

The ever-waking eye of Providence, which looketh on all, looketh with favor and loving kindness on such as "fear" God without despondency, and "hope" in him without presumption; their bodies are often wonderfully preserved in times of danger and want; but, what is of far greater consequence, their souls are saved from spiritual and everlasting death, and nourished, in the wilderness, with the bread of heaven.

20. *Our soul waiteth for the* LORD; *he is our help and our shield.* 21. *For our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name.*

In answer to the foregoing exhortation, the "righteous" are here introduced, declaring their fixed resolution to persevere in faith and patience, "waiting" for the coming of their Lord and Saviour, in whom they "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory," by reason of that humble and holy confidence which they have in him.

22. *Let thy mercy, O* LORD, *be upon us, according as we hope in thee.*

The "hope" of the church was always in Messiah. Of old she prayed for the "mercy" of his first advent; now she expecteth his second. Grant us, O Lord, hope, of which we may never be disappointed.

PSALM XXXIV.

ARGUMENT.

THE prophet, escaped out of the hands of his enemies, uttereth a song of praise, in words which the Christian now employeth to celebrate the far greater deliverance of his Saviour, and himself by him, from the power of more formidable adversaries. 1—7, He calleth his brethren to rejoice with him, and to magnify God for the favor and protection vouchsafed to his servant, in a time of danger; 8—10, he

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exhorteth others to taste and experience the goodness of Jehovah to such as fear him; and for that purpose, 11—14, instructeth them in the nature and effects of divine fear; after which, 15—22, he sweetly descanteth on the certainty of redemption from all the tribulations endured by the faithful in this mortal life.

1. *I will bless the* LORD *at all times: his praise* shall *continually* be *in my mouth.*

The Christian, delivered from many perils, yet continually liable to more, finds cause, at all seasons and in all situations, to bless God. "In all things he gives thanks, and rejoices even in tribulation," which cannot deprive him of the true ground of all joy, the salvation of Christ.

2. *My soul shall make her boast in the* LORD: *the humble shall hear* thereof, *and be glad.*

The glory of every action is to be ascribed to God, whose interpositions, in behalf of his people of old time, afford consolation and joy to the humble and afflicted. But chiefly are the members of the church bound to give thanks for the resurrection and triumph of Christ, their head. "The humble" can never "hear" of this, without being "glad."

3. *O magnify the* LORD *with me, and let us exalt his name together.*

The Christian, not only himself magnifies God, but exhorts others to do likewise; and longs for that day to come, when all nations and languages, laying aside their contentions and animosities, their prejudices and their errors, their unbelief, their heresies, and their schisms, shall make their sound to be heard as one, in magnifying and exalting their great Redeemer's name.

4. *I sought the* LORD, *and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.*

The ground of this rejoicing, to the typical David, might be his deliverance from his enemies; to the true David, it was his rescue from the powers of darkness; to the believing soul, it is her salvation from sin; and to the body it will be redemption from the grave. Then the Lord will deliver us "from all our fears;" and this he will do, if we "seek" him, in his scriptures, and his ordinances.

5. *They looked upon him, and were lightened; and their faces were not ashamed.*

Faith is the eye, sin the blindness, and Christ the light of the soul. The blindness must be removed, and the eye must be directed to the light, which will then illuminate the whole man, and guide him in the way of salvation. He who thus looketh unto the sun of righteousness, for light and direction, shall never be confounded.

6. *This poor man cried, and the* LORD *heard* him, *and saved him out of all his troubles.*

David, when he escaped from his enemies, might be "poor" and destitute. But HE was emphatically "the poor man," who became so for our sakes; who not only possessed nothing, but desired nothing in this world. HE "cried, and Jehovah heard him, and "delivered him out of all his troubles;" as he will hear and deliver the "poor in spirit," who pray unto him. For,

7, *The angel of the* LORD *encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.*

The divine protection and salvation, vouchsafed to the faithful, is here signified, whether we suppose that by "the angel of Jehovah," is meant the presence of Christ in the church militant, as of old in the camp of Israel; or the ministration of created spirits to the heirs of salvation, as in the case of Elisha: 2 Kings, vi. 17. Let the consideration of these invisible guardians, who are also spectators of our actions, at once restrain us from evil, and incite us to good.

8. *O taste and see that the* LORD *is good; blessed is the man* that *trusteth in him.*

David saw and tasted the goodness of Jehovah, when delivered from his adversaries: the son of David when raised from the dead. Both invite us, by "trusting" in God, to behold and experience, in our own persons, the mercies and consolations of heaven.

9. *O fear the* LORD, *ye his saints: for* there is *no want to them that fear him.* 10. *The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger; but they that seek the* LORD *shall not want any good* thing.

He who seeketh the Lord, shall find him; and he who hath found Him, can want nothing. Faith, hope, charity, temperance, purity, patience, and contentment, are the true riches; and the lack of them, the poverty to be most dreaded; since to a Christian, persecution, loss, sickness, nay, death itself, is gain. In the meantime, God is never wanting to provide for his servants what he seeth needful and best, in matters temporal; while tyrants and oppressors, who are, in the world, what "lions" are in a forest, are often, by the just judgment of heaven, reduced to want that which they have ravished from others.

11. *Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the* LORD.

They who, by contemplating the advantages described above, which attend the fear of the Lord, are become desirous of obtaining that fear, must hearken to their heavenly Father, who by his prophet "speaketh unto them as unto children," offering to teach them the good and right way.

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12. *What man* is he that *desireth life*, and *loveth* many *days, that he may see good?*

Every Christian professeth to "desire," not only an animal, but a spiritual "life;" to love, not an old age in time, but an eternal duration; that he may "see those good things" which God hath prepared, not upon earth, but in heaven, for them that love him. Let us observe, therefore, upon what terms such blessings are offered.

13. *Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.*

The tongue is an instrument of much good, or much evil. Life and death are in its power; he that keepeth it, keepeth his soul; and he who offendeth not therewith is a perfect man; it is an unruly member, and the first work of the fear of God must be to bridle it, that no profane, unclean, slanderous, deceitful, or idle words, proceed out of the mouth. And as the heart is to the tongue, what the fountain is to the stream, that must first be purified.

14. *Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.*

Not the tongue only, but the whole man is to be corrected and regulated by the fear of God, operating unto repentance from dead works, and, through faith, unto obedience of life. And he who hath thus obtained peace with God, must ever remember to follow peace with men, reconciling his brethren, if at variance; himself, if it be possible, being at variance with no one.

15. *The eyes of the* LORD are *upon the righteous, and his ears* are open *unto their cry.* 16. *The face of the* LORD is *against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.*

The righteous may be afflicted, like David, and like a greater than David; and their oppressors may, for a time, be triumphant; but, in the end, the former will be delivered and exalted; the latter will either cease to be remembered, or they will be remembered with infamy.

17. The righteous *cry, and the* LORD *heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.*

This great and comforting truth, is attested by the history of the deliverances of Israel from Egypt, Babylon, &c.; of Jonah from the whale; of the three children from the flames, &c., wrought at the supplications of the respective parties in distress: but above all, by the salvation of the world, through the intercession of Jesus Christ. The death of martyrs is their deliverance; and the greatest of all deliverances.

18. *The* LORD *is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.*

We are apt to overlook men, in proportion as they are humbled beneath us; God regards them in that proportion. Vessels of honor are made of that clay, which is "broken" into the smallest parts.

19. *Many* are *the afflictions of the righteous: but the* LORD *delivereth him out of them all.*

Afflictions all must suffer; but those of the righteous end in victory and glory. What soldier would not cheerfully undergo the hardships of a campaign upon this condition? "In the world," saith the Captain of our salvation, "ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world:" John, xvi. 33.

20. *He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.*

It is God who preserveth to man the strength of his body, which lieth in the bones; and that vigor of his spirit, which consisteth in firm and well-established principles of faith and holiness. The bones of the true Paschal Lamb continued whole during the passion; and those of the saints shall be raised whole at the last day, when the mystical body of Christ shall come out of its sufferings, no less perfect and entire, than did the natural.

21. *Evil shall slay the wicked: and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.*

The evil of punishment springs from the evil of sin; and no sin works such "desolation," as a malicious "hatred" and persecution of the true sons and servants of God. Whoso doubts the truth of this, let him only survey and consider attentively the desolation of the once highly favored nation, for their enmity against the King of righteousness, and his faithful subjects.

22. *The* LORD *redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.*

The frequent prosperity of the wicked, and the troubles of the righteous in this world, strike powerfully upon the sense, and are, for that reason, too apt to efface from our minds the notices given us by faith, of that future inversion of circumstances which is to take place after death. To renew, therefore, the impression of such an interesting truth, the redemption of the afflicted righteous is so often insisted on in the course of this Psalm. Enable us, O Lord, to "walk by faith, and not by sight," until we come to thy heavenly kingdom; where, with all thy saints, made perfect through sufferings, we shall "bless and magnify thee at all times," and thy "praise will continually be in our mouth," for evermore.

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SEVENTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM XXXV.

ARGUMENT.

THE prophet, in this Psalm, as in the xxiid, which it resembles, personating Messiah, in his state of humiliation and suffering, 1—3, beseecheth Jehovah to interpose in his behalf; 4—8, predicteth the confusion of his enemies, and, 9, 10, his own triumph; 11—16, describeth the malice of his persecutors against him, and his love towards them; 17—25, repeateth his supplications for deliverance, and enlargeth upon the cruel insults he met with; 26, he again foretelleth the destruction of the adversary, and, 27, 28, the exultation of the faithful.

1. *Plead* my cause, *O* LORD, *with them that strive with me: fight against them that fight against me.*

David, in his afflictions; Christ, in his passion; the church, under persecution; and the Christian, in the hour of temptation, supplicate the Almighty to appear in their behalf, and to vindicate their cause.

2. *Take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for mine help.* 3. *Draw out also the spear, and stop* the way *against them that persecute me: say unto my soul, I* am *thy salvation.*

Jehovah is here described, as a "man-of-war," going forth to the battle against the enemies of Messiah, and his church: the protection afforded by his mercy, is figured by the shield of the warrior, covering his body from the darts of the enemy; and the vengeance of his uplifted arm, is represented by the offensive weapons used among men, such as the spear and the sword. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" If he speaketh salvation, who shall threaten destruction? see Deut. xxxii. 41. Wisdom, v. 20.

4. *Let them be confounded,* or, *they shall be confounded, and put to shame, that seek after my soul: let them be,* or, *they shall be, turned back and brought to confusion, that devise my hurt.*

The consequence of the omnipotent appearing in arms against his adversaries, is here foretold. And the prediction has long since been verified in the "confusion" of Saul, and of the Jews, as it will be finally fulfilled in that of Satan, and all his adherents, at the last day; for the manifestation of which day the church now waiteth, in faith and patience.

5. *Let them be,* or, *they shall be, as chaff before the wind: and let the angel of the* LORD, or, *the angel of the* LORD *shall chase* them.

The Jews, separated from the church and people of Christ, become useless and unprofitable to any good work, possessing only the empty ceremonies and husks of their religion, and by the breath of the divine displeasure dispersed over the face of the earth, afford a striking comment on this verse, and as striking an admonition to every opposer of the holy Jesus. See Psal. i. 4.

6. *Let their way,* or, *their way shall, be dark and slippery: and let the angel of the* LORD, or, *the angel of the* LORD *shall, persecute them.*

A traveller, benighted in a bad road, is an expressive emblem of a sinner walking in his slippery and dangerous ways of temptation, without knowledge to direct his steps, to show him the danger, or to extricate him from it; while an enemy is in pursuit of him, whom he can neither resist nor avoid. Deliver us, O Lord, from all blindness, but, above all, from that which is judicial!

7. *For without cause have they hid for me their net* in *a pit,* which *without cause they have digged for my soul.* 8. *Let destruction,* or, *destruction shall, come upon him at unawares: and let his net that he hath hid,* or, *the net that he hath hid, shall catch himself: into that very destruction let him,* or, *he shall fall.*

The causeless persecution raised against David by Saul, and against our Lord by the Jews, reverted, through the righteous judgment of God, on the heads of the persecutors. The innocent birds escaped; and they who set the toils were themselves taken therein. Saul lost the kingdom which he thought to have secured, and his life also; and the Jews who crucified Christ, "lest the Romans should take away their place and nation," had their place and nation taken away by those Romans, for that very reason. In these histories, all impenitent persecutors of the faith, the church, and the servants of God, may read their doom.

9. *And my soul shall be joyful in the* LORD: *it shall rejoice in his salvation.* 10. *All my bones shall say,* LORD, *who is like unto thee, who deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him?*

These verses, as they describe the joy which the soul and body of Christ were to experience after the resurrection, so shall they one day be sung by the mystical body of the Lord, when delivered from the power of the spoiler, and raised entire from the dust. In the meantime, they may express our gratitude for any temporal preservation from enemies, from sad casualties, and dangerous temptations.

11. *False witnesses did rise up; they laid*

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to my charge, Heb. *asked me*, things *that I knew not*. 12. *They rewarded me evil for good*, to *the spoiling of my soul*.

This was never more literally true of David, than it was of the holy Jesus, when, standing before Pontius Pilate, he received no other return from the Jews, for all the gracious words which he had spoken, and all the merciful works which he had done among them, than that of being slandered, and put to death.

13. *But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing* was *sackcloth: I humbled*, or, *afflicted, my soul with fasting: and my prayer returned into mine own bosom*.

If David prayed, fasting in sackcloth, for Saul, and his associates, the son of David, to heal the souls of men, put on the veil of mortal flesh, and appeared in the form and habit of a penitent, fasting forty days and forty nights, making continual intercession for transgressors, and grieving to think that any men, by their obstinacy, should deprive themselves of the benefits thereof.

14. *I behaved myself*, Heb. *I walked, as* though he had been *my friend*, or, *brother; I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth* for his *mother*, or, *as a mother that mourneth*.

He who so passionately lamented the natural death of Saul, doubtless bewailed greatly his spiritual death of sin; and he who took a comprehensive view of the sins and sorrows of Jerusalem, wept over that wretched city, with the tender affection of a "friend," a "brother," and a "mother"—"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings!"

15. *But in mine adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together: yea, the abjects*, or, *smiters, gathered themselves together against me, and I knew it not? they did tear* me, *and ceased not*.

When the blessed Jesus was suffering for the sins of men, he was insulted by those men for whose sins he suffered. He gave not only his reputation to the revilers, but also his back to the "smiters," though not conscious of the crimes for which they pretended to punish him.

16. *With hypocritical mockers in feasts, or, among the profligates the makers of mock, gnashed upon me with their teeth*.

However this might be true in the case of David, it certainly had a literal accomplishment in the scoffs and taunts of the chief priests, and others, when Christ was hanging on the cross—"Ah, thou that destroyest the temple," &c. "He trusted in God," &c. "Let him come down from the cross," &c. &c. &c., nay, one of the theives, crucified with him, "cast the same in his teeth." Whosoever considers these things, will not be surprised at the expostulation of the following verse.

17. LORD, *how long wilt thou look on? Rescue my soul from their destructions, my darling from the lions*.

Christ prayeth, like David of old, for the manifestation of the promised mercy: for the deliverance of the nature which he had assumed, and which he delighted in. Who does not behold in him, surrounded by his enraged and implacable enemies, a second Daniel, praying in the den of "lions."

18. *I will give thee thanks in the great congregation: I will praise thee among much people*, or, *the strong people*.

This verse is exactly parallel to Psal. xxii. 25, wherein, after an enumeration of his sufferings, our Lord predicteth the praise and glory that should accrue to God in the church, after his resurrection, from the preaching of the apostles; which passage see, and compare; as also, Isa. xxv. 3, and Rev. vii. 9.

19. *Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me;* neither *let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause*.

The prophet, in the person of Christ, returneth again to make supplication, that an end may be put to the insults, the scoffs, and the sneers, of the reprobate. O come that day, when they shall cease for evermore!

20. *For they speak not peace: but they devise deceitful matter against* them that are *quiet in the land*. 21. *Yea, they opened their mouth wide against me* and *said, Aha, aha, our eye hath seen* it.

David would have lived "quietly" under the government of Saul: our Lord did not aim at temporal sovereignty over the Jews; nor did the primitive Christians desire to intermeddle with the politics of the world; yet all were betrayed, mocked, and persecuted, as rebels and usurpers, and the pests of society.

22. This *thou hast seen, O* LORD: *keep not silence: O* LORD, *be not far from me*. 23. *Stir up thyself, and awake to my judgment*, even *unto my cause, my God, and my Lord*. 24. *Judge me, O* LORD *my God, according to thy righteousness; and let them not rejoice over me*.

God "seeth" and knoweth all things; yet he permitteth those who love him best, to be often and long afflicted and oppressed, seeming as one at a "distance," or "silent," or "asleep," that is, regardless of what passes. At such times, we are not to remit, but to double our diligence in prayer, reiterating our cries—"LORD save us! we perish!" Then will he "awake and arise, and rebuke the winds and the seas, and there shall be a calm."

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25. *Let them not say in their hearts, Ah, so would we have it: let them not say, We have swallowed him up.*

Messiah prayeth for an end of his sufferings; that the enemies of mankind might not triumph in his destruction; that death might not finally "swallow him up," but be itself "swallowed up in victory." The church daily maketh the same request.

26. *Let them*, or, *they shall, be ashamed and brought to confusion together, that rejoice at mine hurt: let them*, or, *they shall be clothed with shame and dishonor, that magnify* themselves *against me.*

The accomplishment of this prediction, by the resurrection of Jesus, and the destruction of Jerusalem, is well known. There are two events to come parallel to those two which are past, viz. the resurrection of the faithful, and destruction of the world; when all who, like the Jews, have "rejoiced in the hurt" of Messiah, and have magnified themselves against him," will, like the Jews, be covered with everlasting "confusion."

27. *Let them*, or, *they shall, shout for joy, and be glad that favor my righteous cause: yea, let them*, or, *they shall, say continually, Let the Lord be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant.* 28. *And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness*, and *of thy praise, all the day long.*

As the preceding verse foretold the sorrow of the enemies, so these two describe the joy of the friends to Messiah upon his victory and exaltation, which have been, and shall continue to be, celebrated by the church in these divine hymns, indicted by the Holy Spirit for that purpose, until the songs of time shall end in the hallelujahs of eternity.

PSALM XXXVI.

ARGUMENT.

In the first four verses of this Psalm, the Prophet describeth the principles, the actions, the conversation, and the imaginations of his wicked persecutors; and from thence raising his thoughts to heaven, 5—9, celebrateth the mercy and loving kindness of Jehovah; for a continuation of which, to himself and the church, he fervently prayeth; 10, 11, and 12, foreseeth the downfall of the ungodly.

1. *The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart*, that there is *no fear of God before his eyes.*

If the present reading in the original be the true one, the meaning must be this—The transgressions of a bad man show plainly, in the apprehension of a good one, that the former is destitute of the true fear of God. Bishop Lowth, by a slight alteration or two in the text, renders it to this effect—"The wicked man, according to the wickedness in his heart, saith, There is no fear of God before mine eyes."* The great truth which the prophet here declareth himself to be convinced of, is, that all wickedness proceedeth from the absence of "the fear of God," in the person who commiteth it; that fear being a principle which, while it is predominant in the man, will restrain him from transgression. Our laws suppose as much, when, in the form of indicting a criminal, they attribute the commission of the offence to his "not having the fear of God before his eyes."

2. *For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful:* or, *when his sin is ready to be found out, and to be hated.*

He who hath lost "the fear of God," is first led into sin, and then detained in it: because, having forgotten the great witness and judge of his actions, he vainly thinks his crimes may be concealed, or disguised, till a discovery breaks the charm, and disperses the delusion. The last day will show strange instances of this folly.

3. *The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit: he hath left off to be wise*, and *to do good:* or, *to understand, that he may do good.*

If the fear of God be not in the heart, "inquity and deceit" will be under the tongue; and then, an apostasy from wisdom and goodness, or the wisdom of goodness, which is the only true wisdom, cannot be far off.

4. *He deviseth the mischief upon his bed; he setteth himself in a way* that is *not good; he abhorreth not evil.*

From the actions and the words of him who hath not the fear of God before his eyes, the prophet goeth back to the thoughts and imaginations of his heart, which, even in retirement and solitude, are busily employed upon evil, as those of the righteous are, at those seasons, upon God and goodness. A man may know the state of his mind, in some measure, from his morning and evening thoughts "upon his bed." He who doth not give diligence to "set himself in a good way," will soon be set in one that is not good; and he who doth not "abhor" sin, will, ere long, delight in it.

5. *Thy mercy, O* LORD, is *in the heavens;* and *thy faithfulness* reacheth *unto the clouds*, or, *skies.* 6. *Thy righteousness* is *like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep.*

* See Merrick's Annotations.

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From the wickedness of the world, in which we live, we must lift up our eyes for help and comfort, to the mercy and truth of God, boundless, pure, and beneficial, as the heavens over our heads; to his righteousness, fixed and permanent as the everlasting hills; and to his judgments, stupendous and unfathomable as the waters of the great deep. Truth will engage mercy to accomplish the promised salvation of the elect; and righteousness will employ judgment in executing upon the reprobate the vengeance that is due.

7. *O* LORD, *thou preservest man and beast. How excellent* is *thy loving kindness, O* GOD! *therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.*

The good providence of God extendeth over all creatures, nourishing and preserving them, as well as man, for whose use they were made. We can never enough value and extol the "loving kindness" of him, whose overshadowing "wings" protect and cherish us on earth, in order to bear us from thence to heaven. See Matt. xxiii. 37. Deut. xxxii. 11.

8. *They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.*

In heaven alone the thirst of an immortal soul after happiness can be satisfied. There the streams of Eden will flow again. They who drink of them shall forget their earthly poverty, and remember the miseries of the world no more. Some drops from the celestial cup are sufficient, for a time, to make us forget our sorrows, even while we are in the midst of them. What then may we not expect from full draughts of those pleasures which are at thy right hand, O Lord, for evermore?

9. *For with thee* is *the fountain of life; in thy light we shall see light.*

The rivers before mentioned flow from a "fountain" which fetcheth not supplies from without, but whose spring is within itself, and therefore can never be exhausted. The "water of life" proceeds from "the throne of God and the Lamb:" Rev. xxii. 1. "This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent:" John, xvii. 3. God, like the sun, cannot be seen, but by the light which himself emits.

10. *O continue thy loving kindness unto them that know thee; and thy righteousnes to the upright in heart.*

The prophet, groaning under the oppression of the wicked, who are described in the first part of the Psalm, prayeth for a continuation of the mercies of God, which he has celebrated in the second part. Give us, O God, the knowledge of thee, and make us upright in heart, that thy loving kindness and thy righteousness may be our portion for ever.

11. *Let not the foot of pride come against me; and let not the hand of the wicked remove me.*

The Christian has reason enough to join the prophet in this petition, whether we suppose it to deprecate destruction from proud men and sinners without us, or from pride and sin within us.

12. *There are the workers of iniquity fallen: they are cast down, and shall not be able to rise.*

Faith calleth things that be not, as though they were; it carries us forward to the end of time: it show us the Lord, sitting on his throne of Judgment; the righteous caught up to meet him in the air; the world in flames under his feet; and the empire of sin fallen to rise no more.

SEVENTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM XXXVII.

ARGUMENT.

FROM the beginning to the end of this Psalm, the Holy Spirit, by the prophet, administereth advice and consolation to the church and people of the Lord, oppressed and afflicted in the world, by prosperous and triumphant wickedness. Faith and patience are, therefore, recommended, upon the double consideration of that sure reward which awaiteth the righteous, and that certain punishment which shall be inflicted on the wicked. These two events are set before us in a variety of expressions, and under many lively and affecting images. As the Psalm is rather a collection of divine aphorisms on the same subject, than a continued and connected discourse, it admiteth of nothing farther in the way of argument.

1. *Fret not thyself because of evil doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.* 2. *For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.*

The Holy Spirit here prescribeth a remedy to a very common, and no less dangerous disorder of the mind, namely, a distrust of God's providence, occasioned by frequently beholding the prosperity of the wicked, in this present world. He who alloweth himself time to consider, how soon the fairest spring must give place to a burning summer, a blighting autumn, and a killing winter, will no longer envy, but pity, the fading verdure of the grass, and the still more transient

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glories of the flowers of the field. Herbs and plants are medicinal in more senses than one.*

3. *Trust in the* LORD, *and do good: so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed:* or, *dwell in the land, and feed on truth,* or, *faithfulness.*

The consideration of the speedy and tragical end of sinners, affordeth a powerful argument for perseverance in faith and holiness; for continuing in the church, and making our abode in the pastures of truth; until, in the strength of that sacred viand, we come to the heavenly land of promise, and dwell therein for ever.

4. *Delight thyself also in the* LORD; *and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.*

He who delighteth in the creature, hath not always "the desires of his heart" granted, nor is it fit that he should have them; but he who delighteth in God, will desire what he delighteth in, and obtain what he desireth.

5. *Commit thy way unto the* LORD; *trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.* 6. *And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noon day.*

Malice and calumny may, for a time, overshadow the splendor of an holy character; but the sun will come forth, and the clouds will fly away. This was most eminently true of the blessed Jesus, at his resurrection, and will be verified in his saints, at the last day. The history of Susannah affordeth a remarkable instance of it in this life. "Her heart trusted in the Lord, and he brought forth her righteousness as the light; insomuch that all the assembly cried out with a loud voice, and praised GOD, who saveth them that trust in him." Ver. 35, 60.

7. *Rest in,* or, *be silent to, the* LORD, *and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself, because of him who prospereth in the way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.*

If the spotless Lamb of God was dumb, before those who were divesting him of his honors, and robbing him of his life, "silent" resignation cannot but become one, who suffers for his sins. Israel was commanded to "stand still, and see the salvation of God;" but the people gazed upon the pomp and power of Pharaoh, who was in pursuit of them, till their faith failed, and they began to murmur and despond. How often is this our case, before we perceive it!

8. *Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.* 9. *For evil doers shall be cut off; but those that wait upon the* LORD, *they shall inherit the earth.*

At the day of judgment, when "evil doers shall be cut off," by the flaming sword of eternal vengeance, and when the saints of the Most High shall "inherit the new earth," the latter will have no emotions of anger or envy against the former. Let them so meditate on that day, as to make it present to their minds, and they will have no such emotions now.

10. *For yet a little while, and the wicked* shall *not* be: *yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it* shall *not* be.

The whole duration of the world itself is but "a little while" in the sight of him, whose hope is full of immortality. But the calamities and deaths of princes; the tragical fate of empires, swept with the besom of destruction; the overthrow of cities, whose dimensions, towers, and palaces, once astonished the earth, but whose "place" is now no where to be found by the most curious and diligent inquirer; and the desolations of the chosen city, Jerusalem; all these are even now sufficient to draw forth the tear of commiseration, and to extinguish the kindling spark of envy in every considerate mind.

11. *But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.*

The "meek" are they who bear their own adversities, and the prosperity of their enemies, without envy, anger, or complaint. For these there is a possession in the kingdom and city of the Prince of "Peace," which "the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give them at that day." "Blessed are the meek," saith that Lord and judge himself, "for they shall inherit the earth:" Matt. v. 5. "In the meantime, they, and they only, possess the present earth, as they go towards the kingdom of heaven, by being humble, and cheerful, and content, with what their good God has allotted them. They have no turbulent, repining, vexatious thoughts that they deserve better; nor are vexed when they see others possessed of more honor, or more riches, than their wise God has allotted for their share. But they possess what they have with a meek and contented quietness; such a quietness as makes their very dreams pleasing, both to God and themselves." Walton's Complete Angler, p. 295.

12. *The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth.* 13. *The* LORD *shall laugh at him: for he seeth that his day is coming.*

The original enmity between the Wicked

* See an elegant and beautiful discourse on "the lilies of the field," published among the Sermons of the late learned, ingenious, and worthy Dr. Tottie.

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One and the Just One, will always subsist between the wicked and the just. The rage of the former against the latter is compared to that of mad dogs, or wild beasts; but a day is coming, when all that rage must be turned and employed against themselves. God, who knoweth this, contemneth their vain efforts; and Christians, who know it, and are under the protection of God, should do the same.

14. *The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy,* and *to slay such as be of upright conversation,* or, *upright of way.* 15. *Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bow shall be broken.*

The tongue is a "sword," and a "bow," which shooteth its arrows, even bitter words, against the humble and upright Jesus, and his disciples. But these are not the only weapons that have been drawn against them. How the malice of the Jews returned upon their own heads, no one is ignorant; though few lay it to heart, and consider them as set forth for an example.

16. *A little that a righteous man hath,* is *better than the riches of many wicked.* 17. *For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the* LORD *upholdeth the righteous.*

A little, with the blessing of God upon it, is better than a great deal, with the encumbrance of his curse. His blessing can multiply a mite into a talent, but his curse will shrink a talent to a mite. By him "the arms of the wicked are broken," and by him "the righteous are upholden;" so that the great question is, whether HE be with us, or against us; and the great misfortune is, that this question is seldom asked.

18. *The* LORD *knoweth the days of the upright; and their inheritance shall be for ever.* 19. *They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.*

The favor of God is, to them that obtain it, a better and an enduring substance, which, like the widow's barrel and cruse, wasted not in the evil days of famine, nor will fail in that evil day of eternal want, when the foolish virgins shall be calling in vain for oil, and the rich glutton as vainly imploring a drop of water to cool his tongue.

20. *But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the* LORD shall be *as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away.*

The destruction of the wicked is here again set before us, but under a different image, namely, that of a sacrifice. Senseless, as cattle, they are fatted for the altar, they wanton in their prosperity, and nourish their hearts against the day of slaughter. In the mean time, the Almighty is whetting that sword, which nothing can withstand; and those fires are kindling, which shall never be extinguished. See Isa. xxxiv. 6—10.

21. *The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again; but the righteous showeth mercy and giveth.*

The wicked man, like his leader, the "wicked one," payeth not those whose money or abilities he hath occasion to borrow, and to employ in his service; whereas the disciple of Christ, in imitation of his master, not only punctually observeth the rules of justice and equity, but thinketh it "more blessed to give than to receive." In like manner, though both are indebted, for everything, to the bounty of God, the latter maketh all the acknowledgments and returns in his power; while the former never thinketh of making any.

22. *For,* or, *therefore,* such as be *blessed of him shall inherit the earth; and* they that be *cursed of him shall be cut off.*

They who are like their merciful and gracious Lord, and who, by their devotion and charity, bless him, are blessed of him; they who are like their cruel and iniquitous master, and who, by their ungodliness, injustice, and hard-heartedness, dishonor their Maker and Redeemer, are cursed of him. To the former therefore it will be said, at the last day, "Come, ye blessed, inherit the kingdom;" to the latter, "Go, ye cursed, into the fire."

23. *The steps of a good man are ordered,* Heb. *established, by the* LORD; *and he delighteth in his way.* 24. *Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the* LORD *upholdeth* him with *his hand.*

This was emphatically true of the man Christ, whose steps Jehovah established, and in whose way he delighted; who, "though he fell" by death, yet was raised again by his mighty hand and outstretched arm. It is true likewise of Christians, whom it should support and comfort, in all dangers and temptations. See, for a parallel, Psal. xci.

25. *I have been young, and* now *am old: yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.* 26. *He is ever merciful, and lendeth: and his seed is blessed.*

So far is charity from impoverishing, that what is given away, like vapors emitted by the earth returns in showers of blessings into the bosom of the person who gave it; and his offspring is not the worse, but infinitely the better for it. "The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself:" Prov. xi. 25. The bread which endureth, as well as that which perisheth, is his; and the blessings of time are crowned with those of eternity.

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27. *Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore.* 28. *For the* LORD *loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.* 29. *The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever.*

The justice and mercy of God, the rewards which await the righteous, and the punishments that will, sooner or later, be inflicted on the wicked, are subjects on which whoever shall frequently meditate, "will depart from evil, and do good. Whatsoever thou takest in hand," saith the wise son of Sirach, "remember the END, and thou shalt never do amiss." Ecclus. vii. 36.

30. *The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment.* 31. *The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.*

The word which is here, as in other places innumerable, translated "the righteous," is in the singular number, and might therefore be translated "the Righteous One," or, "the Just One," for it is often designed to point him out to us, who is emphatically so styled; whose "mouth" always spake "wisdom," in whose "heart was the law of God," and whose "steps" NEVER declined to evil. Lord, put thy laws into our hearts, that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth may speak; and as the mouth speaks, the hands may act, and the feet may walk.

32. *The wicked watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him.* 33. *The* LORD *will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged.*

The Jews "watched" that "Just One," daily and hourly; they "sought to slay him," and did so; but "Jehovah left him not in their hands," but vindicated his innocence, by raising him from the dead. And the day is coming, when he who hath stood tamely at the bar of men, and hath suffered for truth and righteousness, shall be advanced to a throne among the saints and martyrs, to assist at the trial of his once-insulting judges.

34. *Wait on the* LORD, *and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see* it.

The apostle, writing to the Hebrew converts, under affliction and persecution, thus expresseth the sentiment contained in this verse. "Cast not away your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry." Heb. x. 35.

35. *I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree,* or, *a native tree, which has grown from the seed without transplantation, in the same spot.* 36. *Yet he passed away, and, lo, he* was *not; yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.*

The great Babylonian monarch had his own exaltation, and subsequent degradation, portrayed to him, in a vision, under this very image, which conveyeth to the mind a most striking and affecting idea of the rise and fall of men and empires, which have now no existence but in history. "I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great. The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of the earth. The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it. I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and behold a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven. He cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit; let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches:" Dan. iv. 10, 11, &c. See the prophet's exposition, 20, 21, &c., and what is said above, on ver. 10, of this Psalm.

37. *Mark the perfect* man, *and behold the upright: for the end of* that *man is peace.* 38. *But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off.*

After taking a view of those short-lived honors, which the world setteth upon the heads of its most favored votaries, let us turn our eyes to "the Perfect and Upright One;" let us behold the permanent greatness and the unfading glory of the TREE OF LIFE, which is in the midst of the paradise of God; whose leaves are for the healing of the nations, and whose fruit is the fruit of "peace."

39. *But the salvation of the righteous is of the* LORD: he is *their strength in the time of trouble.* 40. *And the* LORD *shall help them, and deliver them: he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they put their trust in him.*

Of thee, O Lord Jesu, is our salvation: be thou our strength in this mortal life, which is a time of trouble; help us against our spiritual enemies, and deliver us from them; deliver us from the wicked one, and from all evil; and save us from the guilt and punishment thereof, because we put our trust in thee, and in thee alone.

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EIGHTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM XXXVIII.

ARGUMENT.

IN this Psalm, which is the third of those styled Penitential, the sinner, ver. 1, prayeth to be chastened only, and not destroyed; 2—10, describeth the state of his soul under various images, chiefly borrowed from bodily diseases and pains; 11, 12, complaineth of his friends forsaking, and his enemies persecuting him; but, 13—15, continueth patient and resigned, committing his cause to God, whom, 16—22, he beseecheth to help him, on his confession and repentance. As our Lord took upon him the guilt, and suffered the punishment of sin; as there are some passages in the latter part of the Psalm, literally predictive of his passion, and so understood by the best ancient expositors; and as the sinner should be led by his own sorrows to reflect on those of his Redeemer; the meditations of the reader are, therefore, under each particular, directed by the ensuing comment into that channel.

1. *O* LORD, *rebuke me not in thy wrath; neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.*

The petition here preferred, as in the sixth Psalm, is, that Jehovah would not condemn as a judge, but chasten as a father, for the amendment and preservation of the offender. The same prayer, which we sinners make for ourselves, Christ, who bore our sins, once made for us.

2. *For thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore.*

The "arrows," and the "hand" of God, are his judgments on sin; those internal pangs and terrors which pierce the soul, and those external afflictions and calamities which sink and weigh down the spirits. The holy Jesus, at the time of his passion, received these arrows, and sustained this weight, for the sins of the whole world.

3. There is *no soundness in my flesh, because of thine anger; neither* is there any *rest*, or, *peace*, or, *health, in my bones, because of my sin.*

The expressions in this verse are applicable to the disorders and diseases which sin hath introduced both into the soul and into the body, as the terms, "health," and "sickness," are in Scripture no less frequently employed to describe the state of the former, than that of the latter. If a single sinner thus complaineth of his grief and pain, what must have been the agony and passion of him who suffered for all, mercifully and lovingly submitted to be "made sin for us?"

4. *For mine iniqities are gone over my head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.*

Sins and sorrows are here, as in many other places, represented under the image of mighty waters rolling incessantly over the head of the person sunk into them, and by their accumulated weight depressing him, so that he can no more rise above them. Let us meditate on that deep and tempestuous ocean, into which we were the means of plunging the innocent Jesus.

5. *My wounds stink* and *are corrupt, through my foolishness.*

Sin is the wound of the soul, which must be washed with the tears of repentance, cleansed by the blood of Christ, and healed by the Spirit of the Holy One. It requires great care and attention, until the cure be completed. Otherwise, mortification and death ensue, as in the case of outward wounds, if neglected, or ill managed. See Isa. i. 6, Luke, x. 34. All the sores and pains of the body mystical are lamented by him who is the head of that body, and who felt the sad effects of these corruptions of our nature, in the day of his sufferings.

6. *I am troubled*, Heb. *writhed*, or, *distorted, I am bowed down greatly: I go mourning all the day long.*

As the body by pain, so the soul by guilt, is "distorted" from its original uprightness; it is "bowed down" to the earth, through shame and fear, being no longer able to look up towards heaven, with its accustomed holy confidence; and, instead of rejoicing in a good conscience, and the hope of glory, sorrow is its portion, and grief its familiar acquaintance. And what wonder, that we should be humbled and afflicted for our own sins, when the Son of God was so humbled and afflicted for sins not his own?

7. *For my loins are filled with a loathsome* disease, or, *inflammation*: and there is *no soundness in my flesh.*

The "disease," or "inflammation," complained of, in these metaphorical terms, seems to be the distemperature of our fallen nature, whereby it cometh to pass, that "the flesh lusteth against the spirit;" it is that "other law in our members, warring against the law in our minds, bringing us into captivity to the law of sin," and forcing every son of Adam to cry out—"O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?" Happy is it for us, that we are enabled to go on with the apostle, and to "thank God," that we are delivered, "through Jesus Christ our Lord," on whom were laid the "iniquities of us all."

8. *I am feeble and sore broken: I have*

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roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.

The vigor of a man is broken in pieces, and wasted away, by pain and the disquietude from thence arising, which cause piercing cries, and loud lamentations. When sin in the soul is felt like sickness in the body, it will produce effects in some degree similar. Let us reflect on the sufferings, the cries, and the tears of our Redeemer.

9. LORD, *all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee.*

The "desires" and "groans" of the penitent are known to God, and marked down in his book; and there is no small comfort in thinking and acknowledging that they are so; but much more comfort is there in the remembrance of those inconceivable "desires," and those unutterable "groanings," which the holy Jesus poured forth for us in the days of his flesh, and which prevail for the acceptance of our own.

10. *My heart panteth, my strength faileth me: as for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me.*

In bodily sickness, there are three symptoms of approaching dissolution; and the soul is in great extremity, when the three corresponding symptoms appear upon her; namely, when she hath neither resolution to will, power to perform, nor knowledge to discern the things that belong unto her health and peace.

11. *My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore*, or, *plague*, or, *affliction; and my kinsmen*, or, *my neighbors, stand afar off.*

A body afflicted with a noisome distemper, and a soul troubled on account of sin, find but few friends, who have charity enough to stay with, and minister to them. Let us not be surprised, or offended at this, when we see the righteous Jesus, at his passion, destitute and forsaken by all; as it is written, "Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled:" Matt. xxvi. 56; "and all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things." Luke, xxiii. 49.

12. *They also that seek after my life, lay snares* for me: *and they that seek my hurt, speak mischievous things, and imagine deceits all the day long.* 13. *But I, as a deaf* man, *heard not; and I* was *as a dumb man*, that *openeth not his mouth.* 14. *Thus I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth* are *no reproofs*, or, *altercations.*

These verses describe and recommend to our imitation the behavior of David, and of a greater than David, when under persecution; the former from Absalom, Ahithophel, Shimei, &c., the latter from the chief priests and elders, Judas, and the Jews.

15. *For in thee, O* LORD, *do I hope*, or, *thee do I wait for: thou wilt hear*, or, *answer, O* LORD *my God.*

This verse assigns the reason why the ill usage which we receive at the hands of men, should be borne with patience and resignation; namely, because, as it is not without the permission, so neither will it be without the notice of the Almighty, who will one day take the matter into his own hands. Christ, saith S. Peter, "who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth, yet when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." 1 Pet. ii. 21.

16. *For I said*, Hear me, *lest* otherwise *they should rejoice over me: when my foot slippeth, they magnify* themselves *against me.*

As the glory of God may be said, in some measure, to depend on the behavior and fate of his servants; on that account, besides the stings of conscience, temporal punishments, and the danger of eternal torments, good men should ever have before their eyes the dishonor which is brought on the name of God, and the stop which is put to the progress of his Gospel, by the fall of any eminently righteous and holy person into sin.

17. *For I* am *ready to halt, and my sorrow* is *continually before me.* 18. *For I will declare mine iniquity: I will be sorry for my sin.*

The surest way to have our weakness strengthened, and our sin forgiven, is to acknowledge and confess both; and this we need not be ashamed to do, when we consider, that he, who is the Lord strong and mighty, took our infirmities; and the King of righteousness bare our sins, in his own body, on the tree.

19. *But mine enemies* are *lively*, and *they are strong, and they that hate me wrongfully are multiplied.* 20. *They also that render evil for good are mine adversaries: because I follow* the thing that *good* is.

These words, joined with the preceding, are applicable to the distress of David, and the prosperity of his adversaries; to the sufferings of Christ, and the triumph of the Jews; to the afflictions of the church, and the gaiety of the world; to the weakness of faith, and the strength of nature. The result of all is this, that salvation cometh of God only, and is to be implored in the following words, which conclude the Psalm.

21. *Forsake me not, O* LORD; *O my God be not far from me.* 22. *Make haste to help me, O* LORD *God of my salvation.*

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PSALM XXXIX.

ARGUMENT.

THE prophet, in a state of distress and persecution, determineth, 1—3, to be watchful and silent, as our blessed Lord also was, before his enemies. 4. He prayeth for a due sense of the shortness of human life; and after meditating, 5, 6, on that subject, fixeth all his faith and hope in God, 7, whom he entreateth, but with submission to his will, 8—10, for the remission of sin, and alleviation of misery. 11, from a view of the human body wearing away by sickness, he breaketh out, 12, 13, into a most fervent and affectionate prayer, which ought to be continually in the mouth of the Christian, upon earth.—This Psalm is, with the utmost propriety, appointed by the church to be used at the burial of the dead, as a funeral is indeed the best comment upon it.

1. *I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.*

The Psalm begins abruptly with the result of a meditation on the narrow, slippery, and dangerous paths of life; and more especially on the extreme difficulty of restraining the tongue, amidst the continual temptations and provocations of the adversary. In these circumstances, "watchfulness" and "silence" are resolved on, as the only means of security. Let us behold the Lamb of God, as our great pattern and example herein.

2. *I was dumb with silence, I held my peace even from good, and my sorrow was stirred.*

There is a time to keep silence, because there are men who will not hear; there are tempers, savage and sensual, as those of swine, before whom evangelical pearls, or the treasures of heavenly wisdom, are not to be cast. This consideration stirreth up fresh grief and trouble, in a pious and charitable heart. How much more must it have done so, in the soul of him who lived and died only for the salvation of sinners!

3. *My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned:* then *spake I with my tongue.*

The fire of divine Charity, thus prevented from diffusing itself, for the illumination and warmth of those around it, and, like other fire, rendered more intense by its confinement, presently ascended, in the flame of devotion, towards heaven; while it continued to be fed, and preserved in brightness and vigor, by meditation on the goodness of God, and the ingratitude of man; the transient miseries of time, and the durable glories of eternity.

4. LORD, *make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days what it* is: that *I may know how frail* I am.

Wearied with the contradiction of sinners, and sickening at the prospect of so much wretchedness in the valley of weeping, the soul looks forward to her departure from hence, praying for such a sense of the shortness of human life, as may enable her to bear the sorrows of this world, and excite her to prepare for the joys of a better. "O faithless and perverse generation," saith even the meek and patient Jesus himself, "how long shall I be with you, how long shall I suffer you?" Matt. xvii. 17.

5. *Behold, thou hast made my days as an hand breadth, and mine age is as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best,* Heb. *settled estate, is altogether vanity.*

The age of man, or that of the world, is but a "span" in dimension, a moment in duration; nay, it is less than both; it is "nothing," if compared with the unmeasurable extent, and the unnumbered days of eternity: every hour, from that of our birth, brings us so much nearer to our death: nor can we continue, for a second of time, in one stay. "Behold," then, O Lord, the "vanity" of man; and be so merciful unto him, as to open his eyes, that he may behold it himself!

6. *Surely, every man walketh in a vain show,* or, *in a shadowy image: surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up* riches, *and knoweth not who shall gather them.*

This world is, to the other, as a "shadow" to the substance; nay, temporal life, health, riches, honors, and pleasures, can hardly be called shadows of those which are eternal, in point of resemblance; though, for their illusive and fleeting nature, they are shadows indeed. "The mortal state of man is compounded of light and darkness; seeming to be something, when really it is nothing; always altering, and ending on a sudden; nearest to disappearing, when at full length; sure to continue no longer than while the sun is above the horizon; but liable to vanish, at the interposition of a cloud; and when it is gone, leaving no track behind it." The fate of riches, heaped up by misers, with unutterable care and anxiety, may convince us, how "vainly" men are "disquieted!"

7. *And now,* LORD, *what wait I for? My hope is in thee.*

The soul, that hath a true sense of the vanity of the creature, will at once fix her thoughts and reflections on the Creator. A celebrated writer, describing a man of the world on his death-bed, hath expressed this sentiment with wonderful sublimity and elegance—"Whoever would know, how much

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piety and virtue surpass all external goods, might here have seen them weighed against each other, where all that gives motion to the active, and elevation to the eminent; all that sparkles in the eye of hope, and pants in the bosom of suspicion, at once became dust in the balance, without weight, and without regard. Riches, authority, and praise, lose all their influence, when they are considered as rtches, which to-morrow shall be bestowed upon another; authority, which shall this night expire for ever; and praise, which, however merited, or however sincere, shall, after a few moments, be heard no more."*

8. *Deliver me from all my transgressions; make me not the reproach of the foolish.*

Affliction hath then had its proper effect, when the sufferer is thereby convinced of sin, and therefore prayeth for a removal of the latter, as the only way to be delivered from the former. The "reproaches" of the foolish make no inconsiderable article in the account of a Christian's sufferings; and our Lord frequently complaineth of them, in the Psalms, as one of the bitter ingredients in his own cup.

9. *I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it.*

Whatever materials compose the rod of affliction, and from whatsoever quarter the stroke cometh, let us remember, that the rod is grasped, and the stroke is inflicted by the hand of our heavenly Father. To revenge ourselves on the instrument, is folly; to murmur against the agent, is something worse.

10. *Remove thy stroke away from me: I am consumed by the blow of thy hand.*

The Christian, who knows from whence his troubles proceed, knows where to apply for relief; and having first "petitioned" for remission of sin, ver. 8, he then humbly supplicates for a mitigation of his sorrow. "Father," saith the beloved Son of God, "if thou be willing remove this cup from me." Luke, xxii. 42.

11. *When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty,* or, *all that is delightful,* or, *desirable in him, to consume away like a moth: surely every man is vanity.*

The body of a man is as a "garment" to the soul: in this garment sin hath lodged a "moth," which, by degrees, fretteth and weareth away, first, the beauty, then the strength, and, finally, the contexture of its parts. Whoever has watched the progress of a consumption, or any other lingering distemper, nay, the slow and silent devastations of time alone, in the human frame, will need no farther illustration of this just and affecting similitude; but will discern at once, the propriety of the reflection, which follows upon it:—"Surely every man is vanity!"

12. *Hear my prayer, O* LORD, *and give ear unto my cry: hold not thy peace at my tears; for* I am *a stranger with thee,* and *a sojourner, as all my fathers* were.

Meditation should terminate in devotion; and meditation on human vanity and misery, if indulged as it deserves to be, certainly will do so; it will bring us to our "prayers," our "cries," and our "tears;" and teach us to address the throne of grace, as poor pilgrims in a strange land, who have here no abiding city, but are soon to strike our tents, and be gone for ever. Such was David, though king of Israel; and such was the Son of David, in the body of his flesh, though Lord of all things: both were "strangers and sojourners, as all their fathers," Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were before them, and as all their children have been, and shall be after them, upon the earth.

13. *O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.*

Most fervently and affectionately, therefore, ought the Christian pilgrim to pray, that God would spare his life and respite the fatal sentence, until all that hath been decayed, through the frailty of nature, be renewed by the power of grace; that his perfect reconciliation with the Almighty may be accomplished, and his plenary pardon sealed in heaven, before he taketh his last farewell of the world, and ceaseth to have an existence in these regions of vanity and sorrow.

PSALM XL.

ARGUMENT.

IT is plain, from ver. 6—8, of this Psalm, compared with Heb. x. 5, that the prophet is speaking in the person of Christ, who, 1—5, celebrateth the deliverance wrought for his mystical body, the church, by his resurrection from the grave, effecting that of his members from the guilt and dominion of sin; for the abolition of which he declareth, 6—8, the inefficacy of the legal sacrifices, and mentioneth his own inclination to do the will of his Father, and, 9, 10, to preach righteousness to the world. 11—13, He representeth himself as praying, while under his sufferings, for his own, and his people's salvation; he foretelleth, 14, 15, the confusion and desolation of his enemies, and, 16, the joy and thankfulness of his disciples and servants; for the speedy accomplishment of which, 17, he preferreth a petition.

* Rambler, Vol. II. No. 54.

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1. *I waited patiently for the* LORD, *and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.*

In this verse we hear the voice of the meek Lamb of God, who, though never sorrow was like unto his sorrow, "waited patiently," till the time appointed by the Father came, when that sorrow should be turned into joy. Let not his disciples expect to "inherit the promises," otherwise than "through faith and patience." Four thousand years, the church, under the patriarchs, the law, and the prophets, waited for the first advent of Messiah; and, seventeen hundred years, the church, under the Gospel, hath waited for the second. Jehovah, who inclined himself to the prayers of the former, will also hear the cries of the latter.

2. *He brought me up also out of an horrible pit*, Heb. *a pit of confused tumultuous noise, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock*, and *established my goings.*

The sufferings from which our Redeemer was delivered, are here described under the image of a dark subterraneous cavern, from which there was no emerging, and where roaring cataracts of water broke in upon him, overwhelming him on every side; till, as it is expressed in the xviiith Psalm, "God sent from above, and took him, and drew him out of many waters." Let us celebrate the deliverance of Christ, as a pledge and earnest of our own rescue from the troubles and temptations of life; from the power of death and the grave; from the "horrible pit, and the miry clay;" when we shall be exalted on "the rock" of our salvation, and our "goings" shall be "established" for ever.

3. *And he hath put a new song in my mouth*, even *praise unto our* GOD: *many shall see* it, *and fear, and shall trust in the* LORD.

Every new deliverance requires "a new song." Christians sing their wonderful redemption, from sin and death, in these holy hymns, which God, by his Spirit, hath put into their mouths, and which, by their application to matters evangelical, are become "new" songs, setting forth the praise and glory of God, through Jesus Christ. And who can hear the church, singing the victory and triumph of her mighty and merciful Saviour, without being incited to "fear," and "to believe?"

4. *Blessed is that man that maketh the* LORD *his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.*

He who is sensible how much God hath done, and how little the world can do for him, will earnestly and heartily pronounce the blessedness of the man, who relies upon the real power and goodness of the former, instead of suffering himself to be deceived by the empty parade, and fallacious promises, of the latter.

5. *Many, O* LORD *my God*, are *thy wonderful works* which *thou hast done, and thy thoughts* which are *to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak* of them, *they are more than can be numbered.*

the counsels and works of the ever-blessed Trinity, planned and executed for the benefit of man, in his creation and preservation, his redemption and sanctification, in order to his resurrection and glorification, through Christ, already risen and glorified, are subjects which can never be exhausted, by the intellectual powers of men or angels; but will, to both, afford matter of incessant meditation, and endless praise. Yet, how little do we meditate on them; how seldom, and how coldly, do we praise God for them!

6. *Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.* 7. *Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book* it is *written of me*, 8, *I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law* is *within my heart.*

These words, as the apostle informeth us, Heb. x. 5, are spoken by Christ, in his own person. In them he proclaims the inefficacy of the legal sacrifices to take away sin, and the divine disapprobation of such sacrifices, when relied on for that purpose. He sets forth his own readiness to do, and to suffer, the will of the Father, implied in the Psalm, by the words—"mine ears hast thou opened;" but more plainly expressed in the apostle's citation, by the paraphrase, "a body hast thou prepared me."* He refers to the pre-

* For the expression, "Mine ears hast thou opened," seems equivalent to—"Thou hast made obedient." Thus, Isa. l. 5, "The Lord God hath me opened mine ears, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiters," &c. The LXX, perhaps, meant to interpret this symbolical expression, when they rendered it by σωμα κατηρτισω μοι, "Thou hast prepared," or, "fitted my body," that is, to be "obedient," and to "do thy will." See Dr. Jackson, vol. ii. p. 882. This seems to be the best sense of the present reading, and is well expressed by Mr. Merrick, in his poetical version:

Nor sacrifice thy love can win,
Nor offerings from the stain of sin
Obnoxious man shall clear:
Thy hand my mortal frame prepares
(Thy hand, whose signature it bears,)
And opes my willing ear.

Mr. Pearce, of Exeter, proposed a conjectural alteration of the word אוזנים, "ears," into the two words, אין בוה, "then a body," &c., in which case, a learned friend suggests, כרית, must likewise be altered to כליח, "hast thou prepared, or finished." Bishop Lowth wishes to adopt Mr. Pierce's emendation,

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dictions concerning Messiah, in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, which is here styled—"the volume, or, roll of the book." He declares the pleasure he had in doing the Father's will, or in accomplishing the law; which had taken possession of all his powers and faculties; having been admitted by the understanding, retained in the memory, and rendered operative in the will. "I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart."

9. *I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O* LORD, *thou knowest.* 10. *I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy loving kindness and thy truth from the great congregation.*

As the preceding verses described the priestly office of our Lord, in the execution of which he offered himself, and his all-perfect obedience, for us; so, in the passage now before us, he declares himself to have acted up to the prophetical part of his character, by "preaching" the doctrines of truth, righteousness, and salvation, to the people, without concealing aught through negligence, fear, or favor. Happy the minister of Christ, who, on his death-bed, is able to say the same!

11. *Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O* LORD: *let thy loving kindness and thy truth always preserve me.*

The beloved Son of God here prayeth for the continuation of that mercy, and the accomplishment of those gracious promises, to his body, the church, which made the subjects of his heavenly discourses, in the days of his flesh. Such ought to be the subjects of our discourses, and of our prayers.

12. *For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me.*

If these words, as well as the foregoing, are supposed to be spoken by our Lord (and indeed there doth not appear to be any change of person,) they must be uttered by him, considering himself (for so the primitive writers suppose him in the Psalms frequently to consider himself) as still suffering in his body mystical, the church; and lamenting as head, both the transgressions and the afflictions of the members, accomplishing their warfare in the world. Thus much at least we know, that, after his ascension, when the members were persecuted on earth, the head complained from heaven, as sensible of the pain, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou ME?" Some critics think the word עֲוֹנִי, in the text, may be translated "my punishment." But the author of the anonymous notes, mentioned below, observes, that all "punishments, properly speaking, pre-suppose sin; and especially when they are represented, as here, to overtake and seize a person. Therefore, to understand this of Christ, it must be interpreted of imputed sins, or punishments for them." Merrick's Annotat. p. 295.

13. *Be pleased, O* LORD, *to deliver me: O* LORD, *make haste to help me.*

This short, but forcible prayer, for help and deliverance, in God's good time, and according to his good pleasure, continues, and must continue, to be the prayer of the church, and of all her children, until the day of final redemption.

14. *Let them,* or, *they shall, be ashamed and confounded together that seek after my soul to destroy it; let them,* or, *they shall, be driven backward, and put to shame, that wish me evil.* 15. *Let them,* or, *they shall, be desolate for a reward of their shame that say unto me, Aha, aha!*

The shame, confusion, and desolation to be brought on the Jews by the resurrection, exaltation, and power of him whose blood they thirsted after, and whom they mocked and insulted when in his last agonies on the cross, are here foretold; and the prophecy hath been punctually fulfilled. But a more horrible confusion and desolation awaiteth them, and all other impenitent sinners, at the future revelation of the righteous judgment of God; when vengeance must destroy those, whom mercy cannot reclaim. And, to this ultimate issue of things, the church directeth her views.

16. *Let all those that seek thee,* or, *all those that seek thee shall, rejoice and be glad in thee: let such as love thy salvation,* or, *such as love thy salvation shall, say continually, The* LORD *be magnified.*

in order to render the original conformable to St. Paul's citation from the LXX. And I must confess, if the apostle's argument turned on the word σωμα, such an emendation might seem necessary. It is true, σωμα Χριστου occurs in the succeeding verse; but I think it not essential to the argument, which seems to stand clear and full, whatever be the meaning of σωμα κατηρτισω μοι—"When he said, Sacrifice, &c., thou wouldst not—then he said, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second." The author of the anonymous notes in Mr. Merrick's Annotations, I find, is of this opinion. "It is not certain that the apostle argues from the word σωμα at all. He quotes the translation of the LXX, as he found it in his copy; lays a stress on what is in the Hebrew, but none on the rest; either knowing it not to be there, or being restrained, by the Spirit of God, from making use of it." See Appendix to Mr. Merrick's Annotations, p. 294.

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As the last verses predicted the calamities which should befall the enemies of Messiah, this describeth the unfeigned joy and gladness, springing up in the hearts of such as love the salvation of Jesus, and evermore magnify his holy name in the church, for the blessings of redemption, "eating their meat," as the first Christians are said to have done, "with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God." Acts ii. 46.

17. *But I* am *poor and needy; yet the* Lord thinketh *upon me: thou* art *my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God.*

The church, like her Redeemer, is often poor and afflicted in this world, but Jehovah thinketh upon her, and is solicitous for her support; she is weak and defenceless, but Jehovah is her help and her deliverer. With such a Father, and such a Friend, poverty becometh rich, and weakness itself is strong. In the meantime, let us remember, that he who once came in great humility, shall come again in glorious majesty. "Make no tarrying, O our God; but Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." Rev. xxii. 20.

EIGHTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM XLI.

ARGUMENT.

The application made of the ninth verse of this Psalm, John xiii. 18, showeth, that the prophet is speaking in the person of Messiah. 1—3, he declareth the blessedness of the man that considereth the poor; 4, he prayeth for mercy and favor; 5—9, describeth the behavior of his adversaries, and of one person in particular; 10, petitioneth for deliverance; 11, 12, rejoiceth in hope; and, 13, breaketh out into thanksgiving.

1. *Blessed* is *he that considereth the poor: the* Lord *will deliver him in time of trouble:* Heb. *in the day of evil.*

As Christ considered us, in our state of poverty, so ought we most attentively to consider him, in his; to consider what he suffered in his own person; to discern him suffering in his poor afflicted members; and to extend to them the mercy which he extended to us. He, who was "blessed" of Jehovah, and "delivered in the evil day," by a glorious resurrection, will "bless" and "deliver," in like manner, such as, for his sake, love and relieve their brethren.

2. *The* Lord *will preserve him, and keep him alive,* or, *revive him:* and *he shall be blessed upon the earth; and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies.*

The compassionate and charitable disciple of the holy Jesus is often wonderfully "preserved," and rendered prosperous, even in this world; but his greatest comfort is, that, like his Master, he shall one day be "revived," to inherit the "blessing," in a better country, where no "enemy" can approach, to hurt or molest him.

3. *The* Lord *will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.*

An exemption from sorrow and sickness is not promised to the children of God; but strength and comfort are given unto them, from above, to support and carry them through their trials; and they who, in the days of their health, have, by their alms, given rest to the bodies, or, by their counsels, restored peace to the consciences of others, shall have the bed of pain made easy under them, by the hand of their heavenly Father.

4. *I said,* Lord, *be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee.*

Every son of Adam may, and ought, in these words, to acknowledge his sin, and to entreat for mercy and grace, to heal the disorders of his nature. If we suppose Messiah ever to have uttered this verse in his devotions, as we know he applied the 9th verse to his own case, it is obvious, that he must be understood to confess the sins, not of his own righteous person, but of the nature he had assumed, in order to cleanse and purify it by his sufferings. See above, Psal. xl. 12.

5. *Mine enemies speak evil of me, When shall he die, and his name perish?*

Here we may undoubtedly consider the poor and lowly Jesus, in the day of his humiliation, when he was daily and hourly calumniated by his adversaries; when, restless and impatient at beholding him still alive, they said—"What do we, for this man doth many miracles? If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him. Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold the world is gone after him;" John, xi. 47, xii. 19: and when, grown more furious and clamorous, they cried, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him, crucify him." How many, with the same bitterness of spirit, "speak evil" continually of his doctrines, his church, his ordinances, and his ministers; in effect, saying, "When shall he die, and his name perish?"

6. *And if he come to see* me, *he speaketh vanity: his heart gathereth iniquity to itself;* when *he goeth abroad, he telleth* it.

Thus the enemies of Christ "sent out spies, who should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor:" Luke, xx. 20.

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Thus Judas sat down at the last supper, all the while meditating the destruction of his Master; till at length, rising from table, and going abroad, he put his design in execution: and thus the mystical body of Christ frequently suffers, as his natural body once did, by means of hypocrites and traitors.

7. *All that hate me whisper together against me: against me do they devise my hurt.* 8. *An evil disease*, say they, Heb. *a word*, or, *matter, of Belial*, namely, the crime charged upon him, *cleaveth fast unto him: and* now *that he lieth, he shall rise up no more.*

The whispers of the Pharisees, the counsels of the Sanhedrim, and their taunts and scoffs at the blessed Jesus, when on the cross, "numbered with the trangressors," nor ever expected to "arise" again from the dead, are here most significantly and plainly pointed out. The same weapons are frequently employed against the servants of Christ; but let them not be, on that account, discouraged from following their Master.

9. *Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lift up* his *heel against me.*

"I speak not of you all," saith our Lord to his disciples; "I know whom I have chosen: but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me, hath lift up his heel against me: John, xiii. 18. The sufferings of the church, like those of her Redeemer, generally begin at home: her open enemies can do her no harm, until her pretended friends have delivered her into their hands: and, unnatural as it may seem, they, who have waxed fat upon her bounty, are sometimes the first to "lift up the heel" against her.

10. *But thou, O* LORD, *be merciful unto me, and raise me up, that I may requite them,* or, *and I shall requite them.*

The holy Jesus here maketh his prayer unto the Father, for the accomplishment of the promised resurrection, and foretelleth the righteous judgment that would be executed on his enemies, after their rejection of the gracious offers made them, by the apostles, in his name, notwithstanding all that they had said and done against him. Then the kingdom of God was taken from them, and their house was left unto them desolate. The hour is coming when the church shall arise to glory, and all her enemies shall be confounded.

11. *By this I know that thou favorest me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me.* 12. *And as for me, thou upholdest me in mine integrity, and settest me before thy face for ever.*

The Christian, like his Master, must expect sorrow and tribulation, but he is not thereby deprived of the "favor" of heaven; his spiritual enemies, whatever trouble they may give him, yet do not "triumph" over him; he is preserved in his "integrity," and his reward will be the "vision" of God. For the exaltation, therefore, of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of all believers, in, by, and through him,

13. *Blessed* be *the* LORD God *of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen.*

PSALM XLII.

ARGUMENT.

DAVID, by Absalom's rebellion, driven from Jerusalem to the country beyond Jordan, is there supposed to have indited this Psalm; which, as it is applicable to the case of our Lord, in his state of sojourning and suffering on earth, for our sins; as also, that of the church, under persecution, or that of any member thereof, when deprived of the opportunities of public worship; so doth it, in the most beautiful and pathetic strains, describe the vicissitudes of joy and sorrow, of hope and despondency, which succeed each other in the mind of the Christian pilgrim, while, exiled from the Jerusalem above, he suffereth affliction and tribulation in this valley of tears. The last is the application chiefly made in the comment, as it is the most general and useful one; the others naturally offer themselves, being coincident with, or subordinate to it.

1. *As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O* GOD.

The thirst, which the "hart" experienced, when chased, in sultry weather, over the dusty plains, is here set before us, as a representation of that ardent desire after the waters of eternal comfort, which the temptations, the cares, and the troubles of the world, produce in the believing soul. Happy they who feel this desire, and fly to the well of life, that it may be satisfied. "Blessed are they that thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Matt. v. 6.

2. *My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before* GOD?

Whoever considers what it is to "appear before God;" to behold the glorious face of Jesus; to contemplate a beauty which never fadeth; to be enriched by a beneficence which can never be exhausted, and blessed in a love unmerited and infinite; will find abundant reason to say, again and again, "My soul thirsteth after God;" why is the time of my banishment prolonged? when shall the

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days of my pilgrimage have an end? "when shall I come and appear before God?"

3. *My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy* GOD?

So long as the soul finds herself absent from him whom she loveth, sorrow is still her portion, as well in the day of worldly prosperity, as in the night of adversity. And this sorrow is greatly aggravated by the taunts of the enemy; who, because the promise is delayed, and she suffereth affliction in the mean season, ridiculeth and insulteth her faith and hope, as vain and groundless; intimating, that God hath forsaken her, and tempting her to renounce her principles.

4. *When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holy day.*

As the royal prophet, when driven from Jerusalem by Absalom, was melted into tears at the comparison of his destitute and forlorn situation with his former glory and happiness, when, upon some joyous festival, with all his subjects about him, he had attended the service of the tabernacle, in the city of God; so the Christian pilgrim cannot but bewail his exile from the heavenly Jerusalem, out of which sin hath driven him, and doomed him to wander, for a while, in the vale of misery. Led, by repentance and faith, to look back to the place from whence he is fallen, he sighs after the unspeakable joys of the celestial Zion; longing to keep a festival, and celebrate a jubilee in heaven; to join in the songs of angels, and bear a part in the music of hallelujahs.

5. *Why art thou cast,* or, *bowed, down, O my soul? and* why *art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him* for *the help,* or, *salvation, of his countenance.*

The holy mourner now expostulates with his soul, for suffering herself to sink into a kind of despondency, on account of her afflictions, and the insolent triumph of the adversary; and, as a sovereign cordial for melancholy, prescribes "faith" in God, which will show the morning of salvation dawning, after the night of calamity shall have run its course, a night which cannot be long, and may be very short. When the sun arises, we cannot be without light; when God turns his countenance towards us, we cannot be without "salvation."

6. *O my* GOD, *my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar,* or, *the little hill.*

The soul, although exhorted, in the last verse, to "put her trust in God," yet, considering her own infirmity, still continueth to be dejected: the prophet, therefore, confesseth as much; and maketh his complaint to God, from whom alone he expecteth comfort: and whom he did not forget, while, far from the sanctuary, he wandered up and down in the country beyond Jordan, whither he had fled from the face of Absalom. This world is, to us, that "country beyond Jordan;" Lord, make us to "remember" thee, under all the affliction and tribulations we meet with therein, until, restored to thy Jerusalem, we shall praise thee in heaven, for the mercies experienced upon earth.

7. *Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.*

The prophet describeth the troubles which successively came upon him, by the vengeance of heaven, from above, "raising up evil against him, out of his own house" and kingdom, from beneath, according to the prediction of Nathan: 2 Sam. xii. 11. The ideas seem to be borrowed from the general deluge, or from a storm at sea, when, at the "sound" of descending "waterspouts," or torrents of rain, the depths are stirred up, and put into horrible commotion; the clouds above calling, as it were, to the waters below, and one wave encouraging and exciting another to join their forces, and overwhelm the despairing sufferer.* The whole compass of creation affordeth not, perhaps, a more just and striking image of the nature and number of those calamities which sin hath brought upon the children of Adam.†

8. Yet *the* LORD *will command his loving kindness in the day-time, and in the night his song* shall be *with me,* and *my prayer unto the God of my life.*

The gloomy prospect begins again to brighten, by a ray of hope shooting through it; and the prophet returneth to his rest and confidence in the mercy of God, determining, not only to give him thanks in the day of prosperity, but, as Paul and Silas afterwards did, to sing his praises at midnight, in adversity and affliction.

* Thus, as the learned Merrick observes, one river, in Homer, "calls upon another," to assist in overwhelming the Grecian hero. And, in Æschylus, the fire and sea are said to "swear together," and to give each other their "pledge of confederacy," against the Grecian army.

† Since this was written, I find the author of "Observations on divers Passages of Scripture" agreeing entirely with me in the notion, that David is here describing those waterspouts, and storms at sea, which were common on the Jewish coast, as we learn from Dr. Shaw. Observations, p. 324, 1st edit. So Mr. Merrick likewise, in his Annotations.

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9. *I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me? Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?* 10. *As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me: while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God?*

He ventureth, notwithstanding, meekly and humbly, upon the strength of the promises, to expostulate with him, who was the "rock" of his salvation, as to his seeming destitution, while continually oppressed and insulted by the cutting reproaches of the adversary. See above, ver. 3. These might be thought to render it in some sort necessary, for God to arise, and vindicate his own honor, by the protection and deliverance of his servant. The Psalmist concludes with that exhortation to his soul, to trust in God, and to wait for his salvation, which makes the mournful chorus of this beautiful Psalm.

11. *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him,* who is *the health of my countenance, and my God.* See above, ver. 5.

PSALM XLIII.

ARGUMENT.

THIS Psalm seemeth to be a continuation of the former, written by David in the same circumstances, on the same subject, and closing with the same chorus.

1. *Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly,* or, *unmerciful, nation: O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.*

David, in the same situation as before, appealeth to God, against a people who had driven their sovereign from his capital, to wander like a fugitive and vagabond in the remotest parts of his dominions; against the hypocrisy of Absalom, and the villany of Ahithophel. The Son of David may be supposed to make the same appeal against the same nation, for their far more cruel, treacherous, and iniquitous usage of him, their King and their God. And the words suit the circumstances of an oppressed church, or an injured prince, of all who suffer for truth and righteousness' sake, or who groan under the tyranny of their spiritual enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil.

2. *For thou* art *the God of my strength, why dost thou cast me off? Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?* See above, Ps. xlii. 9. 3. *O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles.*

The chief desire of the Christian, analogous to that of the prophet in distress, is to be saved from sin, as well as sorrow; to be instructed in the way of righteousness, by the "light" of heavenly wisdom, shining in the face of Jesus Christ; to see the accomplishment of the promises, in him who is the "truth;" and to be "led," by this light and this truth, from the land of his pilgrimage, to the "holy hill," and the "mansions" of the just, in the new Jerusalem.

4. *Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy,* or, *the gladness of my joy; yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God my God.*

The royal prophet, upon his restoration to his throne, was to sacrifice on the altar of his God, with the voice of thanksgiving, and to celebrate his mighty Deliverer, in a new song, upon the melodious harp. The Christian, in like manner, foresees a day coming, when sorrow and sighing shall be no more; when he and his brethren are to be "made kings and priests;" when they are to reign with their Redeemer for ever; and upon their golden harps, tuned to an unison with those of angels, to sing his everlasting praises in the courts of the heavenly temple. Therefore,

5. *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him,* who is *the health of my countenance, and my God.* See above, Ps. xlii. 5.

NINTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM XLIV.

ARGUMENT.

IN this Psalm we hear the voice of the church, under persecution; 1—3, recounting the mercies of God vouchsafed to his servants of old time; 4—8, declaring her confidence, that she shall experience the same in her present distress, and shall at length overcome through the power of her Redeemer; for that, notwithstanding her seeming desertion and manifold sufferings, 9—16, there is still a faithful remnant, 17—22, of those who have not bowed the knee to Baal, and who cease not, 23—26, to cry unto God for mercy and deliverance.

1. *We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us,* what *works thou didst in their days, in the times of old.*

The works wrought of old, by the arm of Jehovah, for the salvation of his people, are recorded by the Spirit in the Scriptures of truth, that "through patience and comfort of those Scriptures," as the apostle expresses it, the church and people of God, whensoever

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oppressed and afflicted, in any age or country, "may have hope," that the same God will exert the same power in their behalf. And great is the light, graet is the consolation, which the sacred history, when thus applied, will always afford to the troubled mind.

2. How *thou didst drive out the heathen with thy hand, and plantedst them:* how *thou didst afflict the people, and cast them out.*

If the dispossession of the Canaanites, and the establishment of the house of Jacob in their land, furnished the distressed church of Israel with sufficient ground for confidence; how much force hath the argument since received, by the accomplishment of what was then typified; by the victories of the true Joshua, or Jesus, by the fall of Paganism, and the plantation of the Christian faith in its stead!

3. *For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them; but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favor unto them.*

As it sufficiently appears, that the settlement of Israel in the promised land was the work of God, from the miraculous fall of Jericho; from the prolongation of the day, at the word of Joshua; from the slaughter of the enemy by hailstones from heaven, &c., &c.; so was it the first thing which an Israelite was in duty bound to acknowledge, if he hoped for more mercies at the hand of God. The Christian, in like manner, begins and ends all his prayers with an humble and thankful acknowledgment of the free mercy of God in Jesus Christ; confessing that he "got not" his title to salvation, nor should enter into the possession of it, by "his own" power or merit, but by "the right hand and the arm of his Redeemer, and the light of his countenance, because he had a favor unto him."

4. *Thou art my King, O God: command deliverances for Jacob.*

In these words, the church sums up her argument; as if she had said, O thou, who, going forth before thy people, hast so often and so wonderfully wrought salvation of old time, I still acknowledge thee as my King, able and willing to save; O manifest yet again thy power, yet again let me experience thy mercy. Behold all things are at thy command; all events are at thy disposal. O gracious Saviour, let all work together for good, to her whom thou lovest.

5. *Through thee will we push down our enemies: through thy name will we tread them under that rise up against us.*

The people of God, however persecuted by the power of the world, here declare, that their faith faileth not; that the adversary cannot take from them their holy confidence in God, through whom, and in whose saving name, whenever he shall think fit to hear their prayers, and to appear in their cause, they doubt not of obtaining a final victory, and celebrating a glorious triumph, over all their enemies, terrestrial and infernal. Such should be the hope of every afflicted soul.

6. *For I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me.* 7. *But thou hast saved us from our enemies, and hast put them to shame that hated us.* 8. *In God we boast all the day long: and praise thy name for ever.*

In spiritual, as well as temporal warfare, the appointed means are to be used, but not "trusted in;" man is to fight, but God giveth the victory; and to him must be ascribed the praise, and the power, and the glory; that, as it is writen, "He who glorieth, may glory in the Lord." And thus the Christian church daily singeth, after the example of her blessed and holy representative, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour."

9. *But thou hast cast us off, and put us to shame; and goest not forth with our armies.*

The church having declared her confidence, founded on the former mercies of God vouchsafed unto her, proceedeth now to describe her pitiable state under persecution, when the protection of the Almighty seemed, for a season, to be withdrawn, so that she was no longer able to stand before her enemies.

10. *Thou makest us to turn back from the enemy; and they which hate us spoil for themselves.*

The first consequence of a victory, gained by the enemies over the friends of the church, is rapine and sacrilege; the invasion of her patrimony, and the plunder of her revenues; allured by the prospect of which, robbery hath sometimes entered into the sanctuary, under the mask of reformation.

11. *Thou hast given us like sheep* appointed *for meat; and hast scattered us among the heathen.*

The second calamity which is permitted to fall on the church, in the day of adversity, is, that her people are doomed to sudden and cruel deaths by sanguinary edicts. A third calamity is that of their being driven, in times of persecution, from their native country, to wander among strangers and aliens, or among those in whose communion it is judged unlawful to join.

12. *Thou sellest thy people for nought, and dost not increase* thy wealth *by their price.*

A fourth misery incidental to the people of God, when under persecution, is, that he

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permits them to be held cheap and vile, and to be sold into slavery by their enemies, for little or nothing; a situation far more to be dreaded than the sword of the executioner.

13. *Thou makest us a reproach to our neighbors, a scorn and a derision to them that are round about us.* 14. *Thou makest us a by-word among the heathen; a shaking of the head among the people.* 15. *My confusion is continually before me, and the shame of my face hath covered me.* 16. *For the voice of him that reproacheth and blasphemeth; by reason of the enemy and avenger.*

The fifth and last bitter fruit of persecution is, that thereby the name, and truth, and church, and people of God, are exposed to the insolent and blasphemous scoffs and jeers of infidels; nor is there any circumstance to a pious soul more grievous and afflictive than this.

17 *All this is come upon us; yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant.* 18. *Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way:* 19. *Though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death.*

It is certain that God is provoked, by the sins of a church, to let loose the fury of the oppressor upon her. This is acknowledged by Daniel in his prayer; ch. ix. by the three children in the furnace; Song, ver. 5, 6, by the Maccabean martyrs, suffering under Antiochus; 2 Macc. vii. 18, and by Cyprian, and others, in the primitive times. It is not less certain, that no mere man can say, he is free from transgression. The verses now under consideration, are not, therefore, spoken by the whole church, but by the faithful remnant; nor do they imply an exemption from all sin, but by a steadfast perseverance in the profession of God's true religion, from which it is the aim of persecution to seduce, or to force them. The malice of the tormentors is here compared to the venom of "serpents;" and the state of a suffering church, to the gloom of "death" itself. Happy the soul, that, in the extremity of affliction, can, with humble confidence, thus make her appeal to God, as having held fast her integrity against all the efforts made to wrest it from her, and not having suffered the blasts of adverse fortune, by wearing out patience, to part her from the anchor of faith.

20. *If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange god;* 21. *Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.*

The consideration, that "God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things," 1 John, iii. 20, ought to be strongly impressed on our minds at all times; but more particularly when we are tempted by the world (as, one way or other, we all frequently are) to deny our Master, either by word or deed; and when we have occasion to call heaven to witness our uprightness, under such temptation.

22. *Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter.*

The sufferings of the martyrs were a sufficient proof that they had not yielded to the temptations of the enemy. St. Paul, Rom. viii. 36, cites this verse as predictive of the persecutions then beginning to be raised against the Christians. All may apply it to themselves, who are in circumstances of the same nature; and persecution is generally consistent with itself, contriving, by some means or other, to be rid of those who stand in its way. It is a storm, before which all must either bend, or be broken.

23. *Awake, why sleepest thou, O* LORD? *Arise, cast us not off for ever.* 24. *Wherefore hidest thou thy face,* and *forgettest our affliction, and our oppression?*

There is a time, when the triumphs of the adversary, and the afflictions of the church, tempt men to think, that the eye of Providence is closed, or turned away, and that the Almighty hath ceased to remember their sad estate. But the truth is, that God only giveth his people an opportunity of feeling their own insufficiency; and waiteth till, by fervent and importunate prayer, they solicit his help. For so the holy Jesus slept, while the ship was covered with the waves; until, awakened the cries of his disciples, he arose to their assistance, and spoke the tempest into a perfect calm.

25. *For our soul is bowed down to the dust; our belly cleaveth unto the earth.*

They who are not brought into this state of humiliation by outward sufferings, should bring themselves into it by inward mortification and self-denial, by contrition and abasement, if they would put up such prayers as the Majesty of heaven will deign to accept and answer; if they would repeat with our church, in the spirit of the Litany, the concluding verse of this Psalm—

26. *Arise for our help, and redeem us, for thy mercies' sake.*

PSALM XLV.

ARGUMENT.

IN this Psalm, which is one of those appointed to be used on Christmas day, the prophet, after, 1, proposing his subject, proceeds to

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celebrate King Messiah, 2, for his spiritual beauty and eloquence; 3, 4, 5, his power and victories; 6, his throne and sceptre; 7, his righteousness and inauguration; 8, his royal robes, and glorious palace. 9, the church is introduced as his spouse; her appearance and dress are described; 10, 11, 12, it is foretold that the nations shall bring their offerings to her; 13, 14, 15, her attire, her presentation to Christ, with her attendant train, and the universal joy and gladness, occasioned by the solemnization of the nuptials, are set forth. 16, the prophet predicteth the fruits of this divine union; and, 17, the use that should be made of his sacred epithalamium by the faithful, from generation to generation.

1. *My heart is inditing*, Heb. *boileth*, or, *bubbleth up, a good matter*, or, *the good word: I speak of the things which I have made touching the King: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.*

"The Spirit of the Lord," saith David elsewhere, 2 Sam. xxiii. 2, "spake by me, and his word was in my tongue." In like manner, we are to conceive the prophet here to be full of the divine Spirit, which inspired him with "the good word," or the glad tidings of salvation. The sacred fire, inclosed in his heart, expanded itself within, till at length it brake forth with impetuosity, to enlighten and to revive mankind with this glorious prediction "touching the King," Messiah; and this was uttered by his tongue, under the guidance of the Spirit, as, in writing, the pen is directed by the hand that holds it.

2. *Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.*

After a short introduction, the prophet stays not to enter regularly upon the subject, in the formal way of narration; but, as if he saw the Divine Person, whom he was about to celebrate, standing before him, he breaks out in ecstatic admiration of the second Adam, so different from all the descendants of the first! compounded of a soul fair above all created spirits, and a body pure and perfect, and now brighter than the meridian sun; being invested with the unutterable effulgence of the Divine Nature. Next to the spiritual beauty of Messiah, the prophet is astonished (as those who heard him speak, in the days of his flesh, afterwards were) at "the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth," Luke, iv. 22, through the "grace poured into his lips." Such honey and milk were under his tongue, so delightful and salutary was his doctrine, that even his enemies found themselves obliged to confess, "never man spake like this man:" John, vii. 46. His word instructed the ignorant, resolved the doubtful, comforted the mourners, reclaimed the wicked, silenced his adversaries, healed diseases, controlled the elements, and raised the dead. Therefore hath the Father loved, and exalted, and blessed him, for evermore.

3. *Gird thy sword upon* thy *thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty.*

The prophet, having described the beauty and the eloquence of the King, proceedeth now to set forth his power, and to arm him, as a warrior, for the battle. The "sword" of Messiah is his Word, which, in the language of St. Paul, is said to be "quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword;" and is represented by St. John, as "a sharp two-edged sword," coming out of the "mouth" of Christ: Heb. iv. 12. Rev. i. 16. With this weapon he prevailed, and thereby made his "glory and majesy" to be known throughout the world.

4. *And in thy majesty ride prosperously, because*, or, *for the sake, of truth*, and *meekness, and righteousness: and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible*, or, *wonderful, things.**

Messiah is in these words magnificently described, as making his progress among the nations, seated in his triumphal chariot, adorned with all the regal virtues, achieving the most astonishing victories, and, by the irresistible might of his power, subduing idolatry and iniquity, to the faith and temper of the Gospel.

5. *Thine arrows* are *sharp in the heart of the King's enemies:* whereby *the people fall under thee.*

The prophet goes on to represent Messiah as a warrior, completely armed, and skilful in the use of every weapon. Thus a prince is portrayed, Rev. vi. 2, "I saw, and behold a white horse, and he that sate on him had a bow, and a crown was given unto him; and he went forth conquering, and to conquer." The conquests of Messiah, are either those of his word over sin, or those of his arm over the persecuting powers.

6. *Thy throne, O God*, is *for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom* is *a right sceptre.*

The battle being fought, and the victory gained, we are called to the consideration of the "throne" and "sceptre" of King Messiah, whom the prophet addresseth as God. His throne is distinguished from the thrones of this world, by its endless duration; his scep-

* "The sense, perhaps, may be this: Thy right hand, by its promptness to encounter danger, shall bring thee acquainted with terrible things: thy right hand shall know its office; by habitual exercise, shall render thee expert in war, and lead thee on from conquest to conquest."—MERRICK.

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tre, from the sceptres of earthly potentates, by the unerring rectitude of its administration.

7. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

The sermons, the example, and, above all, the death of Christ, for the expiation of sin, demonstrated his love of righteousness, and hatred of wickedness; and "becausc he humbled himself, and became obedient even to the death of the cross, therefore God highly exalted him:" Phil. ii. 8, 9, and he was "anointed" to the kingdom, "with the Holy Ghost and with power" immeasurable; to the intent that he might bestow, in due proportion, the gifts of heaven on those whom he is not ashamed to call "friends" and "brethren." And these gifts he did bestow on them, by the emission of the Spirit, soon after his ascension and inauguration. See the application of these last two verses to Christ, Heb. i. 8, 9.

8. All thy garments smell *of myrrh, and aloes,* and *cassia, out of the ivory palaces,* whereby they have made thee glad.*

From the throne, the sceptre, and the inauguration, the prophet passes on to the robes and palaces of the King of glory, declaring, that as the perfumed garments of an earthly prince scatter through all the royal apartments a grateful fragrance, so from the glorious vestments of our High Priest and King is diffused the sweet savor of his heavenly graces, filling those happy regions of joy and gladness, where he keeps his residence above, and, by the communication of the Spirit, refreshing the faithful on earth with their odors

9. Kings' daughters were *among thy honorable women,* or, *the splendor of thy train; upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir.*

Such being the divine beauty, and heavenly glory, of the blessed Person, whose nuptials the prophet is now proceeding to describe, it is no wonder that, upon hearing of his fame, innumerable converts, forsaking the vanities even of courts and kingdoms, should follow him, ambitious to have the honor of composing his train; which in reality was the case, upon the publication of the Gospel. And, lo, at "the right hand" of the King, followed by this magnificent procession, appears the church, the spouse of the Lamb, arrayed in the garments of righteousness and salvation, fitly compared, for their inestimable value, and radiant brightness, to the "gold of Ophir."

* That is, palaces adorned, or inlaid, with ivory; as "Ebur atria vestit:" Lucan. x. 119. MERRICK.

10. Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house: 11. *So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty: for he* is *thy Lord; and worship thou him.*

This seemeth to be the voice of God, addressing the church to the following effect—O thou whom I have begotten unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, and whom I have called out of the world, to become "the Lamb's wife," hearken diligently to my voice, consider attentively what I say, and be obedient to my direction; thou art now entering into a new state; let old things pass away; regard no more thy connections with earth; but let the love, and, if possible, the very memory, of thy former condition be obliterated from thy mind; let all things belonging to the flesh die in thee: then shalt thou be truly acceptable and dear in his sight, who, having purchased and betrothed thee to himself, justly claims thy whole heart, thy undivided love, and thy unlimited service and adoration.

12. And the daughter of Tyre shall be there *with a gift;* even *the rich among the people shall entreat thy favor.*

The accession of the Gentiles, with their offerings and donations, to the church, is here predicted under the name of "Tyre," a city in the neighborhood of Palestine, formerly the glory of the nations, and mart of the world. See Isa. lv. and Rev. xxi.

13. The King's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is *of wrought gold.*

The church, in different respects, is sometimes called the spouse, sometimes the sister, and often, as here, the "daughter" of the heavenly King; the connection formed between them, uniting in itself every relation, and every affection. Her beauty, so greatly desired and delighted in by Messiah, is spiritual; it is the beauty of holiness; and her clothing is "the righteousness of saints." 1 Pet. iii. 3, Rev. xix. 8.

14. She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needle-work, or, *embroidery; the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee.*

The different graces of the faithful, all wrought in them by the same Spirit, compose that divine "embroidery" which adorns the wedding garment of the church, who is therein presented to the King, attended by her bride maids, after the nuptial manner. These are either the single churches, or holy souls, that accede to and accompany the spouse; unless we suppose, as some do, that the bride is the Israelitish church, and then the attendants will represent the Gentiles.

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15. *With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the King's palace.*

The solemnization of this marriage between Christ and the church, produceth a jubilee upon earth, and causeth the streets of the heavenly Jerusalem to resound with hallelujahs. For this the angels tune their golden harps, while prophets, apostles, martyrs, and saints, fill up the universal chorus of "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever."

16. *Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.*

In this verse the prophet foretelleth the fruit that should spring from the glorious nuptials which he hath been celebrating. He assureth the spouse, that instead of her earthly kindred, whether Jewish or Pagan, which she was to leave for Christ, should arise an illustrious and royal progeny of believers, out of whom were to be chosen Christian kings to govern the world, and Christian bishops to preside in the church. The expression, "whom thou mayest make princes,' may answer to that in the Revelation, ch. i. ver. 6. "And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father." So Mr. Merrick thinks, who beautifully turns the passage, in his poetical verson, as follows

No more the Patriarchs of thy line
In time's long records chief shall shine;
Thy greater Sons, to empire born,
Its future annals shall adorn.
Thy pow'r deriv'd to them display,
And stretch through earth their boundless sway.

17. *I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations: therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.*

By inditing this divine marriage-song, appointed to be sung in the congregation of the faithful, from age to age, the Psalmist hath been, as he foresaw he should be, the blessed means of celebrating his Redeemer's name, and inciting the nations of the world to do likewise; nor will he cease to be so, while the xlvth Psalm continues to be sung in the church upon earth; that is, while there remaineth a church upon earth to sing in. And we, who now do sing it, are witnesses of these things.

PSALM XLVI.

ARGUMENT.

THE church, in time of trouble, declares, 1, her trust and confidence to be in God, and doubts not, 2, 3, of being preserved safe by means of this anchor, in the most stormy seasons; even then, 4, 5, enjoying the comforts of the Spirit, and the presence of Christ in the midst of her. She describes, 6, and, 7, exults in, the power and might of her victorious Lord; 8, calling the world to view and consider his wonderful works. 9, he himself is introduced as speaking the nations into peace and obedience. She concludes with a repetition of ver. 7, in the way of chorus.

1. *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*

As we are continually beset by "troubles," either bodily or spiritual, so we continually stand in need of a city of "refuge and strength," into which we may fly, and be safe. Religion is that city, whose gates are always open to the afflicted soul. We profess to believe this; do we act agreeably to such profession?

2. *Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;* 3. Though *the waters thereof roar*, and *be troubled*, though *the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.*

The church declares her full and firm confidence in God, as her refuge and strength, amidst all the tumults and confusions of the world, the raging of nations, and the fall of empires. Nay, at that last great and terrible day, when sea and land are to be confounded, and every mountain and hill removed for ever; when there is to be "distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring;" even then, the righteous shall have no cause to "fear," but rather to "lift up their heads" with joy and triumph, because then it is, that their "redemption draweth nigh." Let us set that day before us, and try ourselves by that test.

4. There is *a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God: the holy* place *of the tabernacle of the Most High.* 5. *God* is *in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God shall help her*, and that *right early;* Heb. *when the morning appeareth.*

Such is the ground on which the church erects her confidence. Instead of those waters which overwhelm the world, she has within herself the fountain of consolation, sending forth rivers of spiritual joy and pleasure; and, in the place of secular instability, she is possessed of a city and a hill which stand fast for ever, being the residence of the Eternal, who, at the dawn of the last morning, will finally appear as the protector and avenger of Israel.

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6. *The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved; he uttered his voice, the earth melted.*

How concise, how energetic, how truly and astonishingly sublime! The kingdom of Christ being twofold, these words may be applied either to the overthrow of Heathenism, and the establishment of the Gospel; or to the destruction of the world, and the erection of Messiah's triumphant throne. Conquer, O Lord, all our perverse affections, and reign in us, that we may conquer, and reign with thee.

7. *The* LORD *of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge;* Heb. *an high place for us.*

To the "LORD of hosts" all creatures in heaven and earth are subject; in "the God of Jacob," the church acknowledges the Saviour of his chosen. If this person be IMMANUEL, GOD WITH US, of whom can we be afraid?

8. *Come, behold the works of the* LORD, *what desolations he hath made in the earth.* 9. *He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.*

The church, in these words, proposes to us the noblest subjects for contemplation; namely, the glorious victories of our Lord, partly gained already, and partly to be gained hereafter, in order to the final establishment of universal peace, righteousness, and bliss, in his heavenly kingdom. Then the mighty shall be fallen, and the weapons of war perished, for ever. Hasten, O Lord, that blessed day; but first prepare us for it.

10. *Be still, and know that I* am *God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.*

In this verse there is a change of person, and Jehovah himself is introduced, as commanding the world to cease its opposition, to own his power, and to acknowledge his sovereignty over all the kingdoms of the nations. Let our rebellious passions hear this divine edict,—tremble, and obey.

11. *The* LORD *of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.* See ver. 7.

NINTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM XLVII.

ARGUMENT.

IN this Psalm, appointed by the church to be used on Ascension-day, the prophet, 1, calls the nations to celebrate so glorious a festival; and that, on account, 2, of Christ's power, and the mightiness of his kingdom; 3, of his victories and triumphs, through the Gospel; 4, of the inheritance prepared for his chosen, in the heavenly Canaan, by his own ascension thither; which, 5, is described under images borrowed from the ascent of the ark into the holy city and temple; an occasion, on which the Psalm was probably composed. 6, 7, He again and again exhorts all people to sing the praises of their God and King, and to sing with the understanding, as well as with the voice. 8, 9, The Psalm concludes with predicting the establishment of Christ's kingdom, and the conversion of the Gentile kings and nations to the faith.

1. *O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph.*

The prophet invites all nations to celebrate the festival of Messiah's exaltation, because all nations had a share in the benefits and blessings of that glorious day. God is to be worshipped with bodily, as well as spiritual worship: every "hand" should be lifted up to him who formed it, and every "mouth" should praise him who giveth breath for that purpose.

2. *For the* LORD *most high is terrible;* he is *a great King over all the earth.*

The church celebrates the ascension of Christ, because then he was "highly exalted;" then he became "terrible" to his enemies, all power in heaven and in earth being committed to him; and then he began to display the excellent majesty of his universal kingdom, to which he was then inaugurated, being crowned "King of kings, and Lord of lords."

3. *He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet.*

The consequence of our Lord's ascension was the going forth of the all-subduing Word, under the influence and direction of which, the convinced and converted nations renounced their idols and their lusts, and bowed their willing necks to the yoke of Jesus. This is that great conquest foreshowed by the victories of Joshua, David, and all the faithful heroes of old time, and foretold in language borrowed from their histories.

4. *He shall chose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom he loved.*

The land of Canaan, emphatically styled "that good land, and the glory of all lands," was the "excellent inheritance" chosen for the sons of Jacob, and consigned to them upon the expulsion of the idolatrous nations. But from that inheritance Israel also hath long since been expelled; and Christians, by these words, are taught to look to "an inheritance eternal, and incorruptible, and that fadeth not

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away;" to those happy and enduring mansions which the Son of God is gone to prepare for them that love him, and are beloved of him.

5. *God is gone up with a shout, the* LORD *with the sound of a trumpet.*

Literally, if applied to the ark, as Bishop Patrick paraphrases the verse, "God is gone up, by the special token of his presence, into that holy place, with shouts of joy and praise; the LORD is gone up in a triumphant pomp, with the sound of the trumpet, and all other instruments of music." See 2 Sam. vi. 5. 15. 2 Chron. v. 2, 12, &c. Ps. cxxxii. 8, 9. But spiritually, as applied now by the Christian Church, to the ascension of Christ into heaven, prefigured by that of the ark into the temple—God incarnate is gone up into that holy place, not made with hands; the everlasting doors of heaven are opened, for the King of glory to enter, and re-possess his ancient throne; there he is received by the united acclamations of the celestial armies, by that "shout," that voice of the archangel, and that "trump of God," which are to sound again, in the day when he shall "so come, in like manner, as he went into heaven."*

6. *Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises.* 7. *For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding.*

Who can contemplate the glorious triumph of human nature over its enemies, in the person of our King, risen and ascended, without finding himself constrained to break forth into joy, and to sing, with a thankful heart, and an elevated voice, the praises due unto his holy name! These divine hymns were designed for that purpose. Let us therefore sing them, and let us sing them "with understanding;" considering by whom they were indicted, and of whom they treat; reflecting, that the eternal Spirit is their author; and their subject the blessed Jesus.

8. *God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.*

We are never suffered to forget, that the end of Messiah's exaltation to the right hand of the majesty in the heavens, was the conversion and salvation of the world; so continually do the prophets and apostles delight to dwell upon that most interesting topic, the conversion of the "nations" to the Gospel of Christ. Why do we vainly fancy, that we belong to Him, unless his Spirit "reign" in our hearts by faith?

9. *The princes of the people are gathered together,* even *the people of the God of Abraham: for the shields of the earth belong unto God: he is greatly exalted.*

This verse plainly describeth the kings of the Gentiles as acceding to the church; as becoming, with their subjects, through faith, "the people of the God of Abraham," and a part of the sacred peculium; as submitting to God in Christ that power with which they were invested, as "shields of the earth," or protectors of their several kingdoms; and as bowing their sceptres to the cross of Jesus.* The sense of the verse, expressed in New Testament language, would be, "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever." So let every nation be converted unto thee, O Lord! and every king become thy son and servant; until all the world shall worship thee, sing of thee, and praise thy name!

PSALM XLVIII.

ARGUMENT.

THIS Psalm is one of those which by our church are appointed to be used on Whitsunday, because under images taken from the earthly city Jerusalem, newly rescued from her enemies by him who resided in the material temple on Mount Zion, are celebrated, 1, 2, 3, the glory, the beauty, and the strength of the church Christian, that city and temple of Messiah; who, 4—7, is described as breaking in pieces, and bringing to nothing, the opposition formed against her by the Heathen kings and emperors; on which account, 8—11, she expresseth her gratitude and joy; 12—14, exhorting her people to contemplate, and transmit to posterity, an account of those wonderful works of God, the establishment and preservation of his church in the world; for which she wishes all generations, after her example, to adore and praise his holy name, for ever and ever.

1. *Great* is *the* LORD, *and greatly to be praised in the city of our God,* in *the mountain of his holiness.*

The prophet preparing to celebrate the beauty and magnificence of the church, begins with setting forth the praises of her great Founder; whose wisdom, mercy, and power, as they are conspicuous in all his works, so,

* "Ascendit Deus"—Ascendit arca in Jerusalem cum cantu. Prophetice, Ascendit Christus in cœlum. Bossuet.

* This latter part of the verse is differently explained by the Rev. Mr. Merrick, in his poetical paraphrase of this psalm—

> For he, whose hands, amid the skies,
> Th' eternal sceptre wield,
> To earth's whole race his care applies,
> And o'er them spreads his shield.

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more especially, in this, the chief and crown of all; for which, his name can never be sufficiently extolled, by the inhabitants of the new Jerusalem; and by them it ought to be extolled, for ever and ever.

2. *Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth,* is *Mount Zion,* on *the sides of the north, the city of the great King.*

How "beautiful" is the holy and heavenly Zion, or the Christian church; how truly is she "the joy of the whole earth," by the glad tidings which her ministers continually publish; how properly is this Jerusalem styled, "the city of the great King!"

3. *God is known in her palaces for a refuge.*

The great Founder of the church is also her protector and defender; the dependence of the new Jeruselem, like that of the old, is not in man, or in the arm of flesh, but in the God who resideth in the midst of her. For, surely, unless he kept the holy city, the watchmen in the towers would wake but in vain.

4. *For, lo, the kings were assembled, they passed by together.*

Never were the power and malice of earthly princes more violently bent to hinder the building of Jerusalem, or to pull down what was already built, than they were to prevent the edification of the church, and to root up its foundations. But the event, with regard to the latter, was the same which had often happened, in the case of the former.

5. *They saw* it, and *so they marvelled; they were troubled,* and *hasted away.* 6. *Fear took hold upon them there,* and *pain, as of a woman in travail.*

The potentates of the world saw the miracles of the apostles, the courage and constancy of the martyrs, and the daily increase of the church, notwithstanding all their persecutions; they beheld with astonishment the rapid progress of the faith through the Roman empire; they called upon their gods, but their gods could not help themselves; idolatry expired at the foot of the victorious cross, and the power which supported it, became CHRISTIAN.

7. *Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with the east wind.*

In the foregoing verse, the consternation amongst the enemies of the church was compared to the horrors of a travailing woman; here it is likened to the apprehensions of despairing mariners. Nor indeed can any thing in nature more fitly represent the overthrow of Heathenism by the Spirit of the Gospel, than the wreck of a fleet of ships in a sea. Both are effected by the mighty power of God.*

8. *As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the* LORD *of hosts, in the city of our God: God will establish it for ever.*

The church heard, by the prophets, of the future birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Messiah; of the effusion of the Spirit, and her own enlargement, establishment, and preservation, in the Gentile world. These predictions, which she had so often "heard," she hath "seen" accomplished, even unto this day;* and therefore doubts not of God's continuing his favor and protection to the end of time.

9. *We have thought,* or, *we wait in silence and patience for thy loving kindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple.*

Contemplation of all the wondrous works which the Lord our God hath wrought for us, produces faith in his promises, and resignation to his will: and he that, with these dispositions, waits for God's mercies, in God's house, shall not wait in vain.

10. *According to thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth: thy right hand is full of righteousness.*

Wherever the name of God is known, and his works are declared, there the sacrifice of praise must needs be offered to him, by men who are made sensible of his mercies towards them: and the day is coming, when all the world shall be forced to acknowledge, that his "right hand is full of righteousness," and his judgments are just.

11. *Let Mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad, because of thy judgments.*

The church, and all her children, are exhorted to rejoice, with joy unspeakable and full of glory, on account of the manifestation of divine power, on her behalf, against her enemies. Thus, at the fall of the mystic Babylon, it is said—"Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets, for God hath avenged you on her." Rev. xviii. 20.

12. *Walk about Zion, and go round about*

* Sensus est; qualis ventus vehemens conterit naves magni maris, talis est Dei vis tuentis Jerusalem, et hostilem exercitum dissipantis. BOSSUET. Illustrations of this kind are sometimes introduced, by the sacred writers, with the mark of comparison, and frequently, as here, without it. The meaning evidently is, that as the east wind shatters in pieces the ships of Tarshish, so the divine power struck the Heathen kings with terror and astonishment.

* "Sicut audivimus"—Prophetiæ Isaiæ videtur hic notari: sensusque est; sicut audivimus ab Isaia prophetatum, fore ut obsidio mirabiliter solveretur, ac Sennacherabi Dux Rabsaces, ejusque exercitus cæderetur, sic impletum vidimus. Isa. xxxvii. 21. 2 Reg. xix. 20. Quâ figurâ cœlestis Jerusalem incolæ et ipsi canunt, "sicut audivimus," ex auditu fidei, Gal. iii. 25, "sic vidimus," jam sublato velo, atque apertâ Dei facie. "Deus fundavit eam:" nihil habet metuendum, tanto exempta periculo. Phrophetice de Ecclesia fundata super petram, ideoque inconcussa. Matt. xvi. 18. BOSSUET.

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her: tell the towers thereof. 13. *Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell* it *to the generations following.*

Christians are here enjoined to contemplate, again and again, continually, the fabric of the spiritual Jerusalem, wonderfully raised, and as wonderfully preserved; to consider attentively the parts designed for use, for strength, for ornament; that they may be able to instruct posterity in the nature and history of this holy building, and in their duty of forwarding and defending the same, from generation to generation.

14. *For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide* even *unto death.*

Let the world worship whom or what it will, WE worship none other but Him who, by his Spirit, founded, and, by his power, preserveth the church; who, by that Spirit, "guideth" us through life, and, by that power, will enable us to overcome "death;"* that so we may rejoice and triumph for evermore, as citizens of the city of God, and subjects of the King of glory.

PSALM XLIX.

ARGUMENT.

THE prophet, after a solemn introduction, 1—4, in which the whole world is called upon, to hear a lesson of divine wisdom, 5, proposes the subject in a question, implying the great folly of yielding to the temptation of fear, in the time of affliction and persecution, when the rich and the powerful are in arms against the innocent and righteous Sufferer; inasmuch as, 5—9, no man, by his riches or power, can redeem his brother, or himself, in the evil day; but, 10, wise and foolish die, and leave their estates to others; and, 11—13, notwithstanding all their care and pains, are soon forgotten, while they are detained, by death, in the grave, till they rise to judgment and condemnation. On the other hand, the prophet, in the person of Messiah, 15, declares his faith in a joyful resurrection to life and glory, through the power of Jehovah; and, 16—20, exhorts believers, neither to fear nor envy the man of the world, considering what his latter end is to be.

1. *Hear this, all* ye *people: give ear all* ye *inhabitants of the world.* 2. *Both low and high, rich and poor, together.*

This Psalm opens with great dignity, and the prophet speaks "as one having authority." He demands an audience, like that which is to be assembled at the last day; having something to deliver, which is universally important and interesting; something which concerns every age, and condition, and nation under heaven. And we may observe, that although the sound of this Psalm, when first uttered, could be heard only within the confines of Judea, yet the knowledge of it hath since actually been diffused in the Christian church, throughout the world, from the rising to the setting sun. But how few, alas! have duly attended to the salutary lesson, which it so divinely teacheth!

3. *My mouth shall speak of wisdom; and the meditation of my heart* shall be *of understanding.*

At the call of folly, what multitudes are always ready to assemble! But Wisdom, eternal and essential Wisdom, crieth without; she lifteth up her voice in the streets; and who is at leisure to attend her heavenly lectures? The "mouth" of Jesus always "spake of wisdom;" but few regarded him: "the meditation of his heart" was ever "of understanding;" but it was accounted madness.

4. *I will incline mine ear to a parable: I will open my dark saying upon the harp.*

In the promulgation of wisdom and understanding to the world, the prophet, as the faithful scribe of the Spirit, was to speak only what he should hear, by "inclining his ear" to his divine Teacher; he was to speak in the way of "parable," or proverb, or problem, that is, in such a way, as should require study and diligence, to unfold and explain; in such a way as the world is not inclined to understand, or listen to; as our Lord delivered his doctrines when on earth. And, that melody might serve as a vehicle for instruction, this important lesson was to be set to music, and played upon the harp.

5. *Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil,* when *the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?*

"The iniquity of my heels," says bishop Lowth, is hardly sense. Suppose עקבי to be, not a noun, but the present participle of the verb; it will then be, "The wickedness of those that lie in wait for me," or "endeavor to supplant me." Bishop Hare likewise, as Mr. Merrick has observed, translates עקבי, "insidiantium mihi." I had, at first, given another turn to the Psalmist's question, and, by the "iniquity of my heels," had understood to be meant, "the iniquiiy of my footsteps," that is, "my goings," or "ways;" (עקב being used for footsteps, Ps. lvi. 7. and Cant. i. 8.) as if it had been said—Why, for

* "This God will be our God to all eternity, and (by that power which he has already exerted in our protection) will conduct us through life with safety." MERRICK.

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the sake of procuring riches, or power, should I bring fear and anguish upon myself, in that hour, when my sins will find me out, and neither riches, nor power, can deliver me from the punishment due to them? Thus Bossuet and Mudge understood the verse. But I am clear, that Bishop Lowth's idea is the true one: and then the purport of the question is plainly this—Why should I give way to fear and despondency, in the time of calamity, when the wickedness of my wealthy and powerful adversaries compasseth me about to supplant and overthrow me?

6. *They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches:* 7. *None* of them *can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him:* 8. (*For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever:*) 9. *That he should still live for ever,* and *not see corruption.*

In this world, as the wise man observeth, Eccles. x. 19, "money answereth all things;" and therefore worldly men place their trust and confidence in it; but, in "the evil day," riches shall not be found; nor, if they could be found, would they avail anything towards eternal salvation. For, "what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" says one, who best knew the value of souls; as he paid the price of that "precious redemption" which otherwise must have "ceased for ever;" when he suffered for us on the cross, and arose, on the third day, to life and immortality, without "seeing corruption."*

10. *For he seeth* that *wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others.*

The inability of man to save his brother or himself from death, is evinced by daily experience, which showeth us that the penalty due to sin is continually levied upon all: wisdom and folly go down into the dust together; "and then, whose shall those things be, which have been provided?" Luke, xii. 20. Their possessions come into the hands of others, perhaps of those for whom they never intended them, and who have neither inclination nor ability to do the dead man any service.

11. *Their inward thought* is, that *their houses* shall continue *for ever,* and *their dwelling places to all generations; they call* their *lands after their own names.*

Various are the contrivances of vain men, to have their names written on earth, and to procure, after their deaths, an imaginary immortality, for themselves and their families, in the memory and conversation of posterity; which is not often obtained; and, if obtained, is of no value; when, with less trouble, they might have had their names written in heaven, and have secured to themselves a blessed immortality, in the glorious kingdom of their Redeemer.

12. *Nevertheless man* being *in honor abideth not; he is like the beasts* that *perish.*

The continuance of man in the world is as that of a traveller at an inn, who tarrieth but for a night; so that if honor and wealth do not soon leave him, he must soon leave them, and, like the brutes around him, return to his earth, never more to be seen, and little more to be thought of.* Families decay, and are extinguished, as well as individuals; and the world itself is to perish after the same example. That such beings, in such a place, should think of becoming glorious and immortal!

13. *This their way is their folly; yet their posterity approve their sayings.*

The practice of laboring to acquire wealth and greatness, which can be of no service after death, and of endeavoring to perpetuate the possession of the most uncertain things in nature, is doubtless a folly; but it is a folly which, like many others, is at once blamed, and imitated.

14. *Like sheep that,* or, *they, are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling.*

The high and mighty ones of the earth, who cause people to fear, and nations to tremble around them, must one day crowd the grave; in multitude and impotence, though not innocence, resembling sheep, driven and confined, by the butcher, in his house of slaughter. There death, that ravening wolf, shall feed sweetly on them, and devour his long-expected prey, in silence and darkness, until the glorious morning of the resurrection dawn; when the once-oppressed and afflicted righteous, risen from the dead, and sitting, with their Lord in judgment, shall have the dominion over their cruel and insulting enemies; whose faded beauty, withered strength, and departed glory, shall display to men and angels the vanity of that confidence which is not placed in God.

* Hos versus ad Christum patres referunt, ut sensus sit, nemo purus homo fratrem redimit, sed tantum ille homo qui etiam Deus est. Memorant etiam interpretes R. Mosen Hazardan, qui verba hæc de Rege Messia intelligit, qui pro redemptione fratrum mortuus, postea in æternum vivat, uti prædictum est ab Isaia, liii. 10. BOSSUET.

* "Comparatus est jumentis;" quoad temporalia, nihil habet amplius, atque omnino instar jumenti est, nisi æterna meditatur. BOSSUET.

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15. *But God will redeem my soul,* or, *animal frame, from the power of the grave; for he shall receive me.*

The righteous, as well as the wicked, descend into the grave: to the bodies of the former it is a resting place, as the prison was to St. Peter, till the angel of the Lord shall awaken them, and call them forth; while to the latter it is a condemned hold, from which, at the appointed day, they are to be dragged to execution.* The prophet here expresseth a full and firm faith in the resurrection; and may be conceived as speaking in the person of Him who was first redeemed from the grave, and accepted by the Father; who did not "despond in the days of evil, and when the wickedness of his supplanters compassed him about;" as foreseeing their speedy destruction, and his own approaching resurrection and exaltation. And, therefore, he thus exhorts each disciple of his in the subsequent verses of our Psalm:—

16. *Be not thou afraid when one is made rich; when the glory of his house is increased.*
17. *For when he dieth, he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him.*

This is the conclusion of the Psalm, naturally following from the premises; and addressed by way of exhortation and comfort, to the meek and humble disciples of the Lamb; directing them to fear God, who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell, and not to be afraid of the short-lived power, conferred in this world, by wealth, over the body only. For this purpose, nothing is requisite, but to strip the worldling of the pomp and parade, the connections and relations of life, and to consider him, as he is to appear on the day of his burial, when nothing shall attend him, but his shroud, to the grave, and his works to the judgment seat. View him in this light, which is the proper light to view him in, and he will cease to be the object of fear or envy.

18. *Though, while he lived, he blessed his soul; and* men *will praise thee when thou doest well to thyself.*

Such must be the worldling's end, as described above; however, in the day of health and prosperity, he may bless himself, and say, "Soul, thou hast goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." Nor will such a speech, whenever it is spoken, want its admirers: it will have the applause of numbers, whose opinion it is, that "there is nothing better for a man than that he should eat, and drink, and enjoy himself, all the days of his life, which God giveth him under the sun."

19. *He shall go to the generation of his fathers; they shall never see light.*

They who follow their fathers in sin, must follow them likewise into the torments of that sad place where darkness has fixed its everlasting abode, for the reception of those that ever loved and embraced it; and where the light of life and salvation no longer visits those, who always hated, and rejected it.

20. *Man* that is *in honor, and understandeth not, is like the beasts* that *perish.*

The sum of the whole matter is, that it can profit a man nothing to gain the whole world; to become possessed of all its wealth, and all its power; if, after all, he lose his own soul, and be cast away, for want of that holy and heavenly wisdom which distinguishes him from the brutes, and sets him above them, in his life, and at his death.

* Impiorum inanitate despecta, assurgit ad bonos in Dêum sperantes, quorum Deus animam ab inferis redimit, cum a sepulchro assumptos ad vitam æternam transfert. Alioqui, neque qui sperat in Domino plus reliquis haberet, neque præfatione responderet hujus Psalmi doctrina. BOSSUET.

TENTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM L.

ARGUMENT.

THIS Psalm presents us with a magnificent description, 1, 2, of the promulgation of the Gospel, followed, 3, 4, by a prediction of the terrible manner of God's coming to judge his apostate people, Israel;* 5, 6, of the assembly to be present, and his appeal to men and angels; 7—13, the rejection of the legal, and, 14, 15, the establishment of the Christian worship and services;

* Such is the general idea entertained of this Psalm, by the best Christian expositors, cited in Poole's Synopsis, where we are likewise informed, that the Jewish rabbies affirm the subject of it to be, "that judgment, which will be executed in the days of Messiah"—ignorant, alas! that they themselves, and their people are now become the unhappy objects of that judgment.—"Psalmi quinquagesimi argumentum est ex genere didactico ad moralem theologiam pertinens, grave imprimis et fructuosum: Deo nimirum non placere sacrificia et externos ritus religionis, sed sinceram potius pietatem, laudesque ex grato animo profluentes; neque vero has ipsas pietatis significationes, sine justitia cæterisque virtutibus. Ita duas habet partes; primo arguitur cultor pius quidem, sed ignarus et superstitioni obnoxius; deinde improbus pietatis simulator. Si totum hujusce odæ apparatum et quasi scenam contemplamur, nihil facile potest esse magnificentius. Deus universum genus humanum solenni edicto convocat, ut de populo suo judicium publice exerceat; ponitur in Sione augustum tribunal: depingitur Dei adventis majestas imaginibus a descensu in montem Sinam petitis; celum et terra invocantur divinæ justitiæ testes: tum demum inducitur Dei ipsius sententiam dicentis augustissima persona, per reliquam oden continuata; unde cum cæteris ejus partibus admirabilis illa exordii majestas et splendor communicatur." LOWTH, Prælect. xxvii. ad init.

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16—20, the impenitent Jews are arraigned, and, 21, threatened; and, 22, exhorted to consider, to repent; and, 23, to embrace the evangelical, or spiritual religion. It is to be observed, that in this Psalm, as in our Lord's discourse on the same subject the particular judgment of Jerusalem is a figure and specimen of the last general judgment. Hypocritical and wicked Christians are, therefore, to apply to themselves what is primarily addressed to their elder brethren, the unbelieving and rebellious sons of faithful and obedient Abraham.

1. *The mighty God,* even *the* LORD, *hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun, unto the going down thereof.*

"God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath, in these last days, spoken unto us by his Son." Heb. i. 1. The everlasting Gospel hath made its glorious progress from the eastern to the western world; and the nations have been thereby called to repentence.

2. *Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.*

The law which was given by Moses, proceeded from Sinai, the mount of fear and horror; but the word of grace and truth, which came by Jesus Christ, issued forth from Sion, the chosen mountain of beauty and excellency, in Jerusalem. There that glory first arose and shone, which, like the light of heaven, soon diffused itself abroad over the face of the whole earth.

3. *Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.*

The prophet, having described the first advent of Christ, and the promulgation of the Gospel, now foretelleth his coming to take vengeance on the hypocritical Jews, as, also, his advent to judge the world, prefigured thereby. Upon both those occasions, his coming was to be with sounds and sights of terror, with all the marks and tokens of wrath and fiery indignation, like those displayed on Sinai.

4. *He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people.*

Heaven and earth, men and angels, were to be witnesses of the righteous judgments of God, executed upon his apostate people; as all the celestial armies, and all the generations of the sons of Adam, are to be present, at the general judgment of the last day.

5. *Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.*

These are the words of God, summoning mankind to attend the trial, "calling to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people." Thus it is said of the Son of man, Matt. xxiv. 31. "He shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

6. *And the heavens shall declare his righteousness; for God is judge himself.*

> Th' applauding heav'ns the changeless doom,
> While God the balance shall assume,
> In full memorial shall record,
> And own the justice of their Lord.
>
> MERRICK.

7. *Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I* am *God,* even *thy God.*

This is the voice of the omniscient Judge, impleading his ancient people, who are commanded to attend to the words of him, their God and covenanted Saviour, thus constrained to clear his justice before the world, and to show that they had destroyed themselves. Nominal and wicked Christians will be addressed in the same manner at the last day.

8. *I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt offerings,* to have been, or, *they were, continually before me.*

This judicial process was not commenced against Israel, for their having neglected to offer the sacrifices of the law; their oblations were on the altar, morning and evening, continually, insomuch that God, by the prophet Isaiah, declares himself "weary of them," as not having been accompanied with faith and holiness in the offerer. Many Pharisaical Christians will be condemned for the same reason, notwithstanding their strict and scrupulous attendance upon the ordinances of the new law, if it shall appear that they left religion in the church behind them, instead of carrying it with them into their lives and conversations.

9. *I will take no bullock out of thine house,* nor *he-goat out of thy folds.* 10. *For every beast of the forest* is *mine,* and *the cattle upon a thousand hills.* 11. *I know all the fowls of the mountains; and the wild beasts of the field* are *mine.* 12. *If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world* is *mine, and the fulness thereof.*

The Jewish folly of doating on the legal offerings, as things in themselves acceptable to God, and conferring justification on man, is reproved in these verses, from the consideration, that the various animals slain in sacrifice, were long before, even from the creation of the world, the sole right and property of JEHOVAH; which, therefore, he needed not to have required at the hands of

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his people; nor would he have done so, but for some farther end and intent, signified and represented by such oblations. What that end and intent was, Christians know; and Jews formerly did know. Learn we hence, not to dream of any merit in our works and services; since God hath a double claim, founded on creation and redemption, to all we have, and all we are.

13. *Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?*

Another argument of the Jews' blindness is, the gross absurdity of imagining, that a spiritual and holy being could possibly be satisfied and pleased with the taste and smell of burnt offerings (which God often declareth himself to have been,) any other wise than as they were symbolical of some other sacrifice, spiritual and holy, and, therefore, really propitiatory and acceptable in his sight. That man judaizeth, who thinketh to please God by an external, without an internal service; or by any service, without Christ.

14. *Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High:* 15. *And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.*

The carnal and bloody sacrifices of the law being abolished by the coming of Messiah, the spiritual and unbloody oblations of the Gospel succeed in their stead. These are, the eucharistic sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving for the mercies of redemption; that hearty repentance, that faith unfeigned, and that obedience evangelical, promised and vowed in baptism; that perfect trust in God, and resignation to his will, which our Lord expressed in his prayer, during his sufferings, and which we ought to express in our prayers, when called to suffer with him, if we desire to glorify God for our deliverance through him, in the day of visitation. These are the services enjoined to such Jews as would become Christians, and to such Christians, as would be Christians in deed and in truth.

16. *But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth;* 17. *Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee?*

From hence, to the end of the Psalm, we have an expostulation of God and the unbelieving Jew, who boasted his relation to Abraham, without a spark of Abraham's faith in his heart; and gloried in a law, which condemned him as a breaker of its precepts in every instance. St. Paul's expostulation with the same person, Rom. ii. 17, &c. is so exact a parallel to this before us, that one will be the best comment upon the other—"Behold, thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law. Thou, therefore, that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonorest thou God?" Every minister of God should try and examine himself by these passages in our Psalm and St. Paul, on the former of which the famous Origen is once said to have preached, making application to his own case, not without many tears. And, indeed, "if thou, O Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, who, among us all, shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee:" Ps. cxxx. 3, 4.

18. *When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers.*

St. Paul proceeds in the very same manner —"Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?" All Christians, the clergy especially, should beware not only of committing evil themselves, but of "consenting" to, or "partaking" of, the evil committed by others.

19, *Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit.* 20. *Thou sittest* and *speakest against thy brother: thou slanderest thine own mother's son.*

Had St. Paul thought proper to have gone on to this instance, he might have said—"Thou that teachest a man should not bear false witness, dost thou bear false witness?" for certainly never men brake that commandment in a more flagrant manner than the Jews; never men "gave" their "mouth" more "to evil," or "framed" more "deceit," than they, when they "sat and spake against their brethren," and "slandered their own mother's children," for believing in Jesus Christ. Let us look at this picture of slander, and we shall never fall in love with so detestable a vice.

21. *These* things *hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether* such an one *as thyself; but I will reprove thee, and set* them *in order before thine eyes.*

The forbearance of God only tempted the Jews still to think him on their side, till at length he made the Roman armies his instruments of conviction; who, by crucifying mul-

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titudes of their countrymen in sight of the besieged, did in a wonderful manner "reprove them, and set before them the things which they had done." The day of judgment will do this to all sinners, if temporal chastisements effect it not, before that day shall come.

22. *Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear* you *in pieces, and* there be *none to deliver.*

The stupendous desolation of Jerusalem, for rejecting so kind an admonition of her Saviour, and suffering him to weep over her in vain, should, in a most powerful manner, enforce that admonition on the inhabitants of Christendom, to prevent its falling, after the same example of unbelief.

23. *Whoso offereth me praise, glorifieth me; and to him that ordereth* his *conversation* aright, *will I show the salvation of God.*

This verse resumes and repeats the conclusion intended, by the whole Psalm, concerning the Jewish and the Christian worship; and St. Paul, in the place above cited, affords us a complete comment upon it: "He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; nor is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God."

PSALM LI.

ARGUMENT.

IN this Psalm, composed upon a sad occasion, but too well known, we have a perfect model of penitential devotion. The royal supplicant, robed in sackcloth, and crowned with ashes, entreats for mercy, 1, 2, from a consideration of his own misery, and of the divine goodness; 3, from that of his confession, 4, of God's sole right to judge him; 5, laments the corruption of his nature; but, 6, without pleading it as an excuse; 7, prays for Gospel remission, in legal terms; 8, for spiritual joy and comfort; 9, 10, for pardoning and cleansing grace; 11, 12, for strength and perseverance, that he may, 13, instruct and convert others; 14, 15, deprecates the vengeance due to blood; 16, 17, beseeches God to accept an evangelical sacrifice; and, 18, 19, concludes with a prayer for the church.

1. *Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions.*

The penitent's first ground for hope of pardon, is his own misery, and the divine mercy, which rejoiceth to relieve that misery. The riches, the power, and the glory of a kingdom, can neither prevent nor remove the torment of sin, which puts the monarch and the beggar upon a level. Every transgression leaves behind it a guilt, and a stain; the account between God and the sinner is crossed by the blood of the great propitiatory sacrifice, which removes the former; and the soul is cleansed by the Holy Spirit, which takes out the latter.

2. *Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.*

The soul that is sensible of her pollution, fears she can never be sufficiently purified from it; and therefore prays, yet again and again, continually, for more abundant grace, to make and to keep her holy.

3. *For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.*

The penitent's second plea for mercy is, that he doth not deny, excuse or palliate his fault, but confesses it openly and honestly, with all its aggravations, truly alleging, that it haunts him night and day, causing his conscience incessantly to reproach him with his base ingratitude to a good and gracious Father.

4. *Against,* or, *to, thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done* this *evil in thy sight; that thou mightest,* or, *therefore thou wilt, be justified when thou speakest,* and *be clear when thou judgest.*

A third reason why the penitent sues for mercy at the hand of God is because God alone certainly knows, and is always able to punish, the sins of men. David sinned "against" many; as against Uriah, whom he slew; against Bathsheba, whom he corrupted; and against all the people, to whom he became the cause of much offence and scandal. But the sin was committed in secret; and if it had not been so, he, as king, had no superior, or judge, in this matter, but God only; who, being able to convict the offender, as he did, by the prophet Nathan, would assuredly be justified in the sentence he should pronounce. And he will appear to be so in his determinations at the last day, when he will surprise the wretched unthinking sinner, with a declaration similar to that which he made by his prophet, to the royal offender, 2 Sam. xii. 12. "Thou didst it secretly; but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun."

5. *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.*

The divine mercy is implored by the penitent, fourthly, because that alone can dry up the fountain of original corruption, from which the streams of actual transgression derive themselves; and which is here only la-

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mented as their cause, not alleged as their excuse; seeing, that the greater our danger is of falling, the greater should be our care to stand. David was the offspring of the marriage-bed, which is declared to be "honorable and undefiled." No more, therefore, can be intended here, than that a creature begotten by a sinner, and formed in the womb of a sinner, cannot be without that taint which is hereditary to every son and daughter of Adam and Eve.*

6. *Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward part*, Heb. *the reins: and in the hidden* part *thou shalt make*, or, *hast made, me know wisdom.*

The force of "Behold," is—"It is too plain; I feel it but too sensibly; the punishment I suffer is evidence sufficient, that thou are not contented with a superficial appearance of goodness: thou lovest truth and sincerity in the bottom of the heart. This God was now teaching him, by the correction he made him suffer. The punishment inflicted tended to give him a right understanding of things, and to work it deep into him. MUDGE.

7. *Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*

He therefore petitioneth, in this verse, for the purification which cometh from God only, through the one great propitiatory sacrifice, by the Holy Spirit; and which was foreshown, under the law, by the ceremony of sprinkling the unclean person with a bunch of "hyssop," dipped in the "water of separation." This rite is described, Numb. xix., and explained, Heb. ix. 13, 14. "If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of CHRIST, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God!" From the latter part of the verse we learn, that, by grace and mercy, the pardoned penitent is arrayed in garments no less pure and splendid than those of innocence itself.

8. *Make me to hear joy and gladness*, that *the bones* which *thou hast broken may rejoice.*

Next to the blessing of forgiveness, is to be desired that joy and comfort in the conscience which forgiveness only can inspire: the effect of this, in repairing the vigor of the spirit, decayed through sorrow and anguish, is compared to setting broken bones, and restoring them again to perfect strength. At the resurrection of the body, this petition will be granted in a literal sense, when the "bones," that are mouldered into dust, shall "rejoice," and flourish as "an herb." Isai. lxvi. 14.

9. *Hide thy face from my sins; and blot out all mine iniquities.*

The soul, still restless and uneasy, reiterates her request, that God would not only cease to behold her iniquity for the present, as a man who turneth away his face from a writing, but that he would not behold it more, as a man who blotteth out what is written, so that it can never be read again.

10. *Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right*, or, *constant, spirit within me.*

The purification and renovation of the heart and spirit of a man is a work to which that power only is equal which, in the beginning, created all things, and, in the end, will create all things new. "A right spirit is renewed within us," when the affections turn from the world to God, and charity takes the place of concupiscence.

11. *Cast me not away* from *thy presence*; *and take not the holy Spirit from me.*

The soul that is truly penitent, dreads nothing but the thought of being rejected from the "presence," and deserted by the "Spirit" of God. This is the most deplorable and irremediable effect of sin; but it is one, that in general perhaps is the least considered and regarded of all others.

12. *Restore to me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me* with thy *free*, or, *princely*, or, *liberal, Spirit.*

David prayeth to God to restore to him the unspeakable joy of that salvation which, as a prophet, he had so often contemplated, and celebrated in his divine compositions; he prayeth also to be preserved and continued in that state of salvation, by the Spirit of God, which might enable him to act as became a prophet and a king, free from base desires and enslaving lusts.

13. Then *will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee.*

He that would employ his abilities, his influence, and his authority, in the reformation of others, must take care to reform himself, before he enters upon the work. "When thou art converted," said Christ to St. Peter, "strengthen thy brethren:" Luke xxii. 32. The history of David has "taught" us many useful lessons; such as, the frailty of man, the danger of temptation, the torment of sin, the nature and efficacy of repentance, the

*And so much must surely be intended, as the the learned Bossuet observeth—Numquid David de adulterio natus erat? De Jesse viro justo natus erat, et conjuge ipsius. Quid ergo se dicit in iniquitate conceptum, nisi quia suscepti personam humani generis, et attendit omnium vincula, propaginem mortis originem iniquitatis advertit?

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mercy and the judgments of God, &c. &c. by which many "sinners" have in all ages since been "converted," and many more will be converted, so long as the Scriptures shall be read, and the 51st Psalm recited in the church.

14. *Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation:* and *my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.*

The unhappy criminal entreats, in this verse, for the divine help and deliverance, as if he not only heard the voice of innocent blood crying from the ground, but as if he saw the murdered Uriah coming upon him for vengeance, like an armed man. If he can but obtain the pardon of this sin, he promises to publish to all the world the righteousness of God, who justifieth sinners, and showeth mercy to the penitent; though he must, at the same time, publish likewise his own heinous and horrid wickedness.

15. *O* LORD, *open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.*

The mouth which sin hath closed, can only be opened by pardon; and to show this, he who came, conferring pardon, caused the tongue of the dumb to speak, and to sing praises to the Lord God of Israel. Our church, with great propriety, daily maketh her prayer in the words of this verse, before she entereth upon that part of her service, which consisteth of praise and thanksgiving.

16. *For thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give* it; *thou delightest not in burnt offerings.* 17. *The sacrifices of God* are *a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou will not despise.*

David, in this Psalm, is so evangelical, and has his thoughts so fixed upon Gospel remission, that he considers the Levitical sacrifices as already abolished, for their insufficiency to take away sin; affirming them to be (as indeed they were) nothing in the sight of God, if compared with the sacrifice of the body of sin, offered by contrition and mortification, through faith in Him who, in the fulness of time, was to die unto sin once, that we, together with him, might forever live unto God.

18. *Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem.*

The king forgets not to ask mercy for his people, as well as for himself; that so neither his own nor their sins might prevent either the building and flourishing of the earthly Jerusalem, or, what was of infinitely greater importance, the promised blessing of MESSIAH, who was to descend from him, and to rear the walls of the new Jerusalem. And thus it ought to be the fervent prayer of every man, especially if he be placed in any exalted station, ecclesiastical or civil, that no sins by him committed, may any way prejudice others, or obstruct the edification of the church.

19. *Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousnesss, with burnt offering, and whole burnt offering; then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.*

This had its literal accomplishment, when Jerusalem was finished; when the temple was erected on Mount Sion; and when the Lord graciously vouchsafed to accept the sacrifices, there offered on his holy altars, by king Solomon, at the head of his faithful and devout people. It is spiritually true in the Christian church, where the substance of all the Mosaic types and shadows is offered and presented to the Father, by the Prince of Peace, at the head of the Israel of God. And it will be eternally verified in the kingdom of heaven, where the sacrifices of righteousness and love, of praise and thanksgiving, will never cease to be offered to him that sitteth on the throne, by the church triumphant in glory.

PSALM LII.

ARGUMENT.

IN the person of Doeg the Edomite, who was the persecutor of David, aud the murderer of the priests, are described, 1—4, the enemies of the truth and the church in all ages; whose utter destruction from the presence of the Lord is foretold, 5, with the exultation of the righteous over them, 6, 7; these last rejoice, 8, in the flourishing state under grace, 9, in hope of future glory, through faith and patience.

1. *Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? The goodness of God* endureth *continually.*

"The Psalmist thought it strange," says the pious and ingenious Norris, "that any man should value himself for being able to do mischief, when God esteemed it his glory to do good." In vain did Doeg the Edomite boast himself, in the mischief he had done, by massacring the innocent priests and their families; since "the goodness of God," which is "unchangeable," had decreed the preservation of David. As vainly did Herod, the Idumean, or Edomite, glory in the slaughter of the Bethlemitish infants, since heaven had determined, that the child Jesus should not be one of the number. A persecution may produce martyrs; but the gates of hell are never to prevail against the church.

2. *Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor working deceitfully.*

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The mischief done to religion by men of Doeg's turn, is done by the tongue, before it is done by the hand; it is planned leisurely, and executed speedily and deceitfully.*

3, *Thou lovest evil more than good:* and *lying rather than to speak righteousness.* 4. *Thou lovest all devouring words,* O thou *deceitful tongue.*

As the Christian spirit delighteth itself in goodness, truth, and charity, so the antichristian spirit is here characterised by its offending, not out of ignorance, or inadvertence, but mere love of wickedness, falsehood, and malice. To this pitch many have arrived; and who, that enters upon a course of sin, can say, that he shall stop short of it?

5. *God shall likewise destroy thee for ever; he shall cast thee away, and pluck thee out of* thy *dwelling place and root thee out of the land of the living.*

Wonderful is the force of the verbs in the original, which convey to us the four ideas of "laying prostrate, dissolving as by fire, sweeping away as with a besom, and totally extirpating root and branch," as a tree is eradicated from the spot on which it grew. If a farther comment be wanted, it may be found in the history of David's enemies, and the crucifiers of the Son of David: but the passage will be fully and finally explained by the destruction of the world of the ungodly at the last day.

6. *The* righteous *also shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him* saying, 7. *Lo,* this is *the man* that *made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches,* and *strengthened himself in his wickedness.*

Such shall be the triumph of Messiah, and of all his faithful servants with him, over the enemies of man's salvation, at that hour, when, the world being in flames, the confidence that hath been placed in it, must perish for evermore.

8. *But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God: I will trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.*

The representative of Messiah portrays himself, as the reverse of Doeg and the wicked, in terms applicable likewise to his great original. He was in the house of God, they were in the world; he was as a fruitful olive tree, they were as barren unprofitable wood; he was to be daily more and more strengthened, established, settled, and increased; they were to be cast down, broken, swept away, and extirpated; and all this, because he had trusted in the mercy of God, they in the abundance of their riches. We Gentiles were branches of the "wild olive," but are now grafted into the good one: Lord, make us to flourish and bear fruit, in thy immortal "courts," world without end!

9. *I will praise thee for ever, because thou hast done* it; *and I will wait on thy name, for* it is *good* * *before thy saints.*

Faith foresees salvation, and anticipates the day of victory and triumph; in the mean time, while she waiteth patiently for its coming, she refresheth and comforteth herself with frequent meditation on the virtue and power of that saving "name," which is "as ointment pored forth;" by the fragrance of its odors inviting and alluring innumerable converts to run after their beloved Redeemer, in the way of his commandments.

TENTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM LIII.

THIS Psalm is in a manner the same with Psalm xiv. except that there is some difference in ver. 5, for which, as well as for the explanation of the whole, the reader is referred to the comment on Psalm xiv.

PSALM LIV.

ARGUMENT.

DAVID, as it has been supposed when betrayed by the Ziphites, and surrounded by Saul, 1, 2, committeth his cause, and preferreth his prayer, to God; 3, complaineth of his cruel treatment; 4, 5, expresseth his assurance of the divine favour, and the destruction of his enemies. 6, 7, Being delivered from his danger, he blesseth and praiseth God. See the history, 1 Sam. xxiii. The application to Christ, and to Christians, is plain and easy; for which reason, our church hath appointed this Psalm to be read on Good Friday.

1. *Save me, O God, by thy name, and judge me by thy strength.* 2. *Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth.*

Happy the man, to whom, in the day of trouble, the "name of the Lord is a strong tower," into which "he runneth, and is safe:" Prov. xviii. 10. Happy the man, that can, with an holy confidence, commit his cause to the judgment and determination of God, and

* "Sicut novacula acuta"—quæ cum tangere leniter et tantum radere videretur, alte infigitur, ac valut blandiendi specie vulnerat: ita Doeg cum Achimelech in tabernaculo Domini amicitiæ pietatisque specie versatus, fœdo indicio viros optimos prodigit. 1 Reg. xxi. 7, xxii. 9. BOSSUET. So MUDGE—"Working treacherously," that is, Thy tongue is like a sharp razor, that cuts one's throat before one is aware of it.

* It is a "goodly thing," it carries a good appearance, it looks well before the friends of God, to see me praising him, and putting my trust in him. MUDGE.

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expect redress from the Almighty. His prayer mounteth up to Heaven, and returneth not without a blessing.

3. *For strangers are risen up against me, and oppressors seek after my soul: they have not set God before them.*

The Ziphites, though David's countrymen, acted the part of "stangers," or "aliens," in seeking to deliver him up to his unjust and cruel enemy. Such a part did the whole Jewish nation act towards their anointed Prince and Saviour, when they actually delivered him over to the Roman power. And the church frequently meeteth with such treatment at the hands of her children, as she had reason to expect only from "strangers to the covenant of promise." Something like this always happens, when men, instead of setting God, set the world before their eyes.

4. *Behold God is mine helper; the* LORD *is with them that uphold my soul.* 5. *He shall reward evil to mine enemies; cut them off*, or, *thou shalt cut them off, in thy truth.*

In all dangers and difficulties, whether temporal or spiritual, the faithful sons and servants of God fix their eyes upon their heavenly Father, and gracious Master: they have recourse to the divine promises, the performance of which they know to be certain, and therefore can foresee and foretell the destruction of their enemies. Thus David, and a greater than David, supported themselves in their troubles; and the church, with her children, must do likewise.

6. *I will freely sacrifice unto thee; I will praise thy name, O* LORD, *for* it is *good.* 7. *For he hath delivered me out of all my trouble: and mine eye hath seen* his desire, Heb. *mine eye hath looked, upon mine enemies.*

Saul, under the direction of the Ziphites, having encompassed David on every side, was suddenly called off to defend his country from an invasion of the Philistines; by which means David escaped, and "beheld his enemies" retreating. 1 Sam. xxiii. 27. For this event he offers the sacrifice of a heart freed from fear, and praises the name of his great Deliverer. Christians should follow his example: they should consider, how great things God hath done for THEM, and should never suffer the voice of praise and thanksgiving to cease in the church of the redeemed. Beautiful and emphatical will these two concluding verses appear, when conceived as proceeding from the mouth of our Lord, upon his resurrection. And we hope one day to repeat them, on a like occasion, saying, each in his own person: "I will freely sacrifice unto the; I will praise thy name, O Lord, for it is good. For he hath delivered me out of all my trouble, and mine eye hath looked upon mine enemies."

PSALM LV.

ARGUMENT.

DAVID, as it is supposed, when driven out of Jerusalem by the rebellion of Absalom, and in danger of being suddenly cut off, 1—8, maketh his prayer to God, and describeth the sorrowful state of his soul; 9—11, entreateth that the iniquitous counsels of the rebels may be divided and confounded; 12—14, upbraideth Ahithophel, the Judas of those times, with his foul treason; 15—19, foretelleth the tragical end of faction, and his own re-establishment through faith in God, notwithstanding the base treachery of his favorite son and favorite servant.

1. *Give ear to my prayer, O God; and hide not thyself from my petition.* 2. *Attend unto me, and hear me: I mourn in my complaint*, Heb. *am dejected in my meditation, and make a noise;* Heb. *am in a violent, tumultuous agitation, as the waves of the sea.*

In the person of David, driven from his throne, and put in fear of his life, by Absalom and Ahithophel, we here behold our blessed Redeemer, on the day of his sufferings, praying earnestly, and repeating his supplications, as in the garden of Gethsemane, at the prospect of that sea of sorrows which was then about to overwhelm his agonizing soul. In all our afflictions, he was afflicted: in all his afflictions, let us be so.

3. *Because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked: for they cast iniquity upon me, and in wrath they hate me.*

O my God, how can we repine and murmur at any oppression and calumny which we suffer from the world, when we see, not only thy servant David, but thy son Jesus, thus hated, slandered, and persecuted, by their own subjects, and their own children?

4. *My heart is sore pained within me; and the terrors of death are fallen upon me.* 5. *Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me.*

These words describe the state of David's mind, when he went over the brook Cedron, and up Mount Olivet, "weeping as he went," and expecting speedily to be cut off; 2 Sam. xv. 23, 30, they describe the agony of the Son of David, when he likewise went over the same brook Cedron, John, xviii. 1, at the time of his passion, when his soul was "sore amazed and very heavy, and exceeding sorrowful, even unto death:" Mark, xiv. 33, 34,

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and every man will too surely find them applicable to himself, if not often before, yet certainly in the day when the king of terrors shall draw up all his forces in array against him.

6. *And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove!* for then *would I fly away, and be at rest.* 7. *Lo,* then *would I wander far off,* and *remain in the wilderness.* 8. *I would hasten my escape from the windy storm* and *tempest.*

The calamitous situation of the Israelitish monarch forced from him a wish, that, like the bird of innocence and peace, he could in a moment banish himself from the distractions of his rebellious kingdom, and enjoy, in holy solitude, that repose which his sceptre and his guards were not able to procure him. There are few crowned heads, perhaps, which have not more than once found occasion to form, if not to utter, a wish of the same nature. Much more must it have been the wish of that King of Israel whose crown was literally one of thorns; and it often will be the wish of the devout Christian, who, sensible of the sins and follies that overspread the earth, is taught to aspire after his heavenly country, and to delight in that resemblance of it which the closet best affords.

9. *Destroy, O* LORD, and *divide their tongues, for I have seen violence and strife in the city.*

In these words, king David beseecheth God to divide, confound, and bring to nothing the counsels of an iniquitious and rampant faction, for so, in the history, we find him saying, "O LORD, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness:" 2 Sam. xv. 31. The royal prayer was heard; the counsel of Ahithophel was overthrown by Hushi, and the disappointed traitor became his own executioner. The treason of Judas, against the Son of David, brought him likewise to the same end. Every one, who finds himself tempted to betray the cause of his prince, or his Saviour, should set these two examples before his eyes.

10. *Day and night they go about it upon the walls thereof; mischief also and sorrow* are *in the midst of it.* 11. *Wickedness is in the midst thereof; deceit and guile depart not from her streets.*

The violence and strife, mentioned at the conclusion of the preceding verse, are here described as going their rounds, like an armed watch, upon the walls, to guard rebellion, which had taken up its residence in the heart of the city, from the attacks of loyalty, right, and justice, driven with the king beyond Jordan. Thus from the same city was righteousness afterwards expelled, in the person of the King of righteousness, and nothing left, but "mischief, and sorrow, wickedness, deceit and guile," encompassed with a guard of "violence and strife." Whether the state of the Gentile Christian church, in the last days, will not too much resemble that of Jerusalem before its destruction, is a matter of sad and sorrowful consideration.

12. *For* it was *not an enemy* that *reproached me, then I could have borne* it; *neither* was it *he that hated me,* that *did magnify* himself *against me, then I would have hid myself from him.* 13. *But* it was *thou, a man, mine equal, my guide;* Heb. *my disciple, and mine acquaintance.* 14. *We took sweet counsel together,* and *walked unto the house of God in company.*

The many aggravating circumstances of Ahithophel's treason against David, and that of Judas against Christ, are here strongly marked. The treachery of pretended friends is generally to the church, as it was to her Lord, the beginning of sorrows. Ingratitude, malice, and falsehood, are ingredients that must always meet in the composition of a traitor.

15. *Let death seize upon them,* or, *death shall remove,* or, *take them away,* and *let them* or, *they shall, go down quick into hell; for wickedness* is *in their dwellings, and among them.*

In these words is predicted the tragical fate of Ahithophel, and those who followed Absalom; of Judas and the Jews; and of all who shall resemble them in wickedness. The sudden destruction of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, who, for stirring up a rebellion against Moses and Aaron, "went down alive into the pit," seems here alluded to, as the grand representation of the manner in which the bottomless pit shall one day shut her mouth for ever upon all the impenitent enemies of the true King of Israel, and great High-priest of our profession.

16. *As for me, I will call upon God, and the* LORD *shall save me.* 17. *Evening and morning, and at noon will I pray, and cry aloud, and he shall hear my voice.*

Prayer is the believer's universal medicine for all the disorders of the soul within, and his invincible shield against every enemy that can attack him from without. "Morning, Evening, and Noon," were three of the hours of prayer in the Jewish church. We find holy Daniel observing them in Babylon, notwithstanding the royal decree, which made it death for him so to do. The event fully justified him, and showed the power of true devotion, whose high prerogative it still is, to save the righteous from the mouth of THE LION. See Dan. vi. 10, 22, 2 Tim. iv. 17, 1 Pet. v. 8.

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18. *He hath delivered*, or, *shall deliver, my soul in peace from the battle* that was, or, *is, against me; for there were*, or, *are many with me.*

David was delivered in peace, when, after having suppressed the rebellion, he was brought back in triumph to his capital; the Son of David was delivered in peace, when victorious over the enemies of man's salvation, he arose from the dead, and returned to the Jerusalem above; the believing soul is delivered in peace, when her sins are forgiven, and her corruptions mortified; and the bodies of the saints shall be delivered in peace, at the resurrection of the just. The ground of all these deliverances is one and the same—"They that are with us are more than they are against us:" 2 Kings, vi. 16. "Greater is he that is in us, than he that is in the world." 1 John, iv. 4.

19. *God shall hear, and afflict*, or, *humble, them, even he that abideth of old. Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God;* or *because they will not be converted, and fear God.*

He who inhabiteth eternity, remaining unchangeably the same, from everlasting to everlasting, hath determined to hear the prayers of his faithful servants, and finally to humble the pride of his unrepenting adversaries. These are the decrees which he hath thought fit to promulgate; and on them we may safely depend.

20. *He hath put forth his hands against such as be*, or, *were, at peace with him; he hath broken his covenant.*

The prophet goes on to describe the perfidy of traitors, like Ahithophel and Judas. Every wilful and malicious sinner "puts forth his hand against" the person who is "at peace with him," nay, who "made his peace" with the Father; and, by so doing, "braketh the covenant" into which by baptism he was admitted. O blessed Jesus, how often do we betray thee to thine enemies, our own lusts, and consider it not!

21. The words *of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war* was *in his heart; his words were softer than oil, yet* were *they drawn swords.*

Of this complexion are the cant of hypocrites, the charity of bigots and fanatics, the benevolence of atheists, the professions of the world, the allurements of the flesh, and the temptations of Satan, when he thinks proper to appear in the character of an angel of light.

22. *Cast thy burthen upon the* LORD *and he shall sustain thee; he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.*

The conclusion of the whole matter is, that amidst all dangers and adversities, whensoever they oppress us, we are to put our full trust and confidence only in his mercy, who delivered David, and the Son of David, out of all their troubles. He, who once bore the burthen of our sorrows, requested of us, that we would now and ever permit him to bear the burthen of our cares; that, as he knoweth what is best for us, he may provide it accordingly. When shall we trust Christ to govern the world which he hath redeemed?

23. *But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction; bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days: but I will trust in thee.*

O terrible voice of most just judgement, pronounced against rebels and murderers! Of the sure and certain execution of his righteous sentence who can doubt, that considers the fate of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram; of Absalom, Ahithophel, and Judas; and, above all, of the city which contained within its walls those rebels, and murderers, of the Son of God? Let us trust forever in Him alone who can thus deliver, and thus destroy.

ELEVENTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM LVI.

ARGUMENT.

DAVID, in danger from the Philistines, among whom he was driven, as well as from Saul and his associates, is supposed to, 1, 2, make supplication to God, in whom, 3, 4, he placeth all his hope and confidence, 5—7, of being saved from the wiles and stratagems of the adversary; 8, 9, he comforteth himself with the consideration that God taketh account of his sufferings, and will appear on his behalf; 10, 11, he repeateth the declaration of his faith in the divine promises; and, 12, 13, concludeth with paying his tribute of praise and thanksgiving. What David was in Philistia, the disciples of the Son of David are in the world.

1. *Be merciful unto me, O God: for man would swallow me up; he fighting daily oppresseth me.* 2. *Mine enemies would daily swallow* me *up, for* they be *many that fight against me, O thou Most High.*

The same words are applicable to the situation and circumstances of David, pursued by his enemies; of Christ, persecuted by the Jews; of the church, afflicted in the world; and of the soul, encompassed by enemies, against whom she is forced to wage perpetual war.

3. *What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.* 4. *In God I will praise*, or, *glory in, his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.*

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Whoever, like the prophet Elisha's servant, beholdeth only the forces of the enemy, will be apt, like him, to cry out, "Alas, my master! how shall we do?" 2 Kings, vi. 15. But when our eyes are "opened," to see those "horses and chariots of fire" which are "round about us;" when we perceive the promises of the Word, and the mighty succors of the Spirit, which are all on our side; we no longer fear the terrors of the temptations of flesh and blood; but find ourselves enabled to do, and to suffer, all things, through faith in him who strengthened us to the battle. "He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee;" so that WE may boldly say, "The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." Heb. xiii. 5, 6.

5. *Every day they wrest my words: all their thoughts* are *against me for evil.* 6. *They gather themselves together, they hide themselves, they mark my steps, when they wait for my soul.*

These words could not be more literally descriptive of the behavior of David's persecutors, than they certainly are of that conduct which the Scribes and Pharisees observed towards our blessed Lord; when, like serpents by the way side, they "marked his steps," till a proper opportunity offered, to dart from their lurking place, and "bruise his heel." We think it hard, when men use us in this manner; but surely we either forget that the Son of God was so used before us, or that we are his disciples.

7. *Shall they escape by iniquity? In* thine *anger cast down the people, O God.*

The signal vengeance inflicted on the enemies of David, of Christ, and of the church, in different ages, may serve to convince us, that if we would "escape," it must be FROM sin, not BY it.

8. *Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle:* are they *not in thy book?*

Known unto God are all afflictions of his servants, while banished, like David, from their abiding city and country, they "wander" here below, in the land of their pilgrimage. The "tears" of penitents are had in remembrance, and, as so many precious gems, will one day adorn their crowns. How dear, then, in the sight of God, were the "wanderings" and the "tears" of the holy Jesus, submitting to perform penance for those sins which he never committed!

9. *When I cry* unto thee, *then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for God* is *for me.*

What can we possibly desire more, than this assurance, that, how many, or how formidable soever our enemies may be, yet there is one always ready to appear in our defence, whose power no creature is able to resist. "This I know," saith David; and had we the faith of David, we should know it too.

10. *In God will I praise* his *word; in the* LORD *will I praise* his *word.* 11. *In God have I put my trust; I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.* See above, on verse 4. 12. *Thy vows* are *upon me, O God; I will render praises unto thee.* 13. *For thou hast delivered my soul from death;* wilt *not* thou deliver *my feet,* or, *my feet also,* or, *assuredly, from falling, that I may walk before God, in the light of the living?*

At the conclusion of this Psalm, and of many others, the prophet speaketh of his deliverance as actually accomplished; he acknowledgeth himself under the obligation of the vows made to God in the night of affliction, which he is resolved to pay on the morning of triumph and jubilee. O come that glorious morning, when the redeemed shall sing eternal praises to the Lord God of their salvation, for having "delivered their souls from death, and their feet from falling, that they may walk before him, in the light of the living!"

PSALM LVII.

ARGUMENT.

THIS Psalm is said to have been composed by David, on occasion of his escape from Saul, in the cave at Engedi. See 1 Sam. xxiv. 3. And the church, by her appointment of it as one of the proper Psalms for Easter day, hath instructed us to transfer the ideas to the resurrection of Christ from the grave. The Psalm containeth, 1—3, an act of faith in the promises; 4, a description of grievous sufferings; 5, a prayer for the exaltation of God's glory, which is repeated again at the conclusion; 6, a prediction of judgment on the adversary; 7—10, a strain of the highest exultation and jubilee.

1. *Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me, for my soul trusteth in thee; yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until* these *calamities be overpast.*

David, encompassed by his enemies at Engedi, putteth up this prayer to God; the same prayer we may suppose to have been used by our blessed Lord, when drawing near to the grave, and gate of death: and the church ever continueth the use of it, until she be delivered from the bondage of corruption. In the meantime, she teacheth her children to put themselves, living and dying, under the protection of him who is always

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ready to "gather them, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings." There they may rest in peace and security.

2. *I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth* all things *for me.*

David cried unto God, and was delivered out of the hand of Saul; the Son of David cried unto God, and was delivered from the power of the grave; the saints on earth cry unto God, and shall be delivered out of their troubles; the souls under the altar in heaven cry unto God, Rev. vi. 10, and shall obtain a reunion with their bodies. Thus God "performeth all things for us," as well as for David.

3. *He shall send from heaven, and save me* from *the reproach of him that would swallow me up. God shall send forth his mercy and his truth.*

We have all an enemy, who would "swallow us up; and we look for the manifestation of the divine mercy and truth" from "heaven" for the salvation of our souls, and the redemption of our bodies. A grand specimen of this manifestation was exhibited to the world, on that glorious morning when Jesus Christ arose from the dead.

4. *My soul* is *among lions:* and I *lie* even among *them that are set on fire,* even *the sons of men, whose teeth* are *spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.*

The fiercest of beasts, the most devouring of elements, and the sharpest of military weapons, are selected, to represent the power and fury of David's enemies. How much stronger and more furious, were the enemies of Christ, who, in the day of his passion, resembled Daniel in the lion's den, the three children in the fiery furnace, and who stood alone, exposed to the assaults of men and evil spirits!

5. *Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens;* let *thy glory* be *above all the earth.*

God is exalted and glorified among men by the display of mercy and judgment, in the salvation of his children from the hands of their enemies. But chiefly was he exalted, when, having raised up his Son Jesus, he set him at his own right hand, far above all principalities and powers, and every thing that is named in heaven and in earth. This was the great exaltation, prefigured, foretold, and incessantly prayed for, in the ancient church.

6. *They have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down: they have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen,* or, *shall fall,* themselves.

David compares himself, 1 Sam. xxvi. 20, to a bird upon the mountains, which the fowler endeavoreth to hunt into the nets and snares set up and prepared for its destruction. So was the most innocent dove, the holy Jesus, persecuted by the Jews, until they had driven him into the snares of death, and laid him low in the grave. But the enemies of both received, in the end, the due reward of their deeds, and "fell into the pit they had digged."

7. *My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise.*

At the prospect of approaching deliverance, the prophet, in the person of Christ, declareth his heart to be fixed and established, steadfast and unmovable in the midst of trouble, even then preparing to celebrate its future enlargement with songs of praise.

8. *Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I* myself *will awake early,* or, *awaken the morning.*

For this purpose, he calls upon his tongue, with all his instruments of music, all the organs of the body and affections of the soul, to unite their powers in sweetest harmony and concert, and to awaken the sluggish morning with the voice of melody, sounding forth the glories of redemption. Thus should the morning be ever celebrated, on which Christ "arose from the dead, and became the first-fruits of them that slept."

9. *I will praise thee, O* LORD, *among the people; I will sing unto thee among the nations.* 10. *For thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds.*

The resurrection of Jesus from the grave, foreshadowed in the deliverance of David from the hand of Saul, was a transaction which caused the heavens, and all the powers therein, to extol the mercy and the truth of God. The nations of the earth, whose are the benefits and the blessings of that transaction, are, therefore, bound evermore to make it the subject of their praises and thanksgivings; which is done by the members of our church, every Easter-day, in the words of this very Psalm.

11. *Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; let thy glory* be *above all the earth.*

Even so, be thou still exalted, O blessed Jesu! above the heavens, while the angels sing their hallelujahs on high; and let thy glory be above all the earth, while, in psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs, the congregations of the redeemed incessantly magnify thy salvation below.

> The church triumphant, and the church below,
> In songs of praise their present union show;
> Their joys are full, our expectation long;
> In life we differ, but we join in song.
> Angels and we, assisted by this art,
> May sing together, though we dwell apart.
>
> WALLER on DIVINE POESIE.

PSALM LVIII.

ARGUMENT.

IN the persons of Saul and his iniquitous counsellors, the enemies of Christ and the

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church, 1, 2, are reproved, and, 3—5, their malice is described, by comparing it to the poison of serpents, which are proof against every art made use of to tame them: 6—9, the destruction of the wicked is foretold, and illustrated by six similitudes; 10, the triumph of the righteous is likewise predicted; as also, 11, the effect it will produce, in manifesting to all the world the providence and glory of God.

1. *Do ye indeed speak righteousness, O congregation? Do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men?* 2. *Yea, in heart ye work wickedness; ye weigh the violence of your hands,* or, *your hands frame violence, in the earth.*

The proceedings of Doeg, and other associates of Saul, against David; those of Judas and the Sanhedrim, against our Lord; and those of wicked princes, and court sycophants, in different ages, against the faith and the church; as they spring from the same principles, so they flow pretty much in the same channel. Such men may here see their characters drawn, and their end foretold.

3. *The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.*

The tares sown by the enemy, in human nature, appear early: and show us how far we are "estranged" from original truth and righteousness. What can be expected, unless grace and discipline prevent it, but that "out of the serpent's root shall come forth a cockatrice, and his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent?"

4. *Their poison is like the poison of a serpent;* they are *like the deaf adder* that *stoppeth her ear:* 5. *Which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely.*

The wicked are here compared to serpents, for that malignity in their tempers which is the venom and poison of the intellectual world. And whereas there are some kinds of serpents, which, by musical sounds, may, for a time, as it is said, be disarmed of their rage, and rendered so tame as to be handled without danger;* yet the evil dispositions of some men, like those of one particular species of the serpentine race, are often invincible. The enmity of a Saul, was proof against the heavenly strains of the son of Jesse; and He, who spake as "never man spake," was stung to death by "a generation of vipers."

6. *Break,* or, *thou wilt break, their teeth, O God, in their mouths; break,* or, *thou wilt break, out the teeth of the young lions, O* LORD.

The destruction of the wicked is represented under six similitudes. The first is that of breaking the teeth of lions, being the most terrible weapons of the most terrible animals. But what is human power, at its highest exaltation, if compared to that of God? The mountains of Gilboa can tell us, the desolated Zion can inform us, how the mighty are fallen, and the weapons of war perished; because the mighty had exalted themselves, and the weapons of war had been lifted up, against truth and innocence, protected by the decrees of heaven.

7. *Let them,* or, *they shall, melt away as waters* which *run continually,* or, *pass away;* when *he bendeth* his bow to shoot *his arrows, let them,* or, *they shall, be as cut in pieces.*

The second similitude used to illustrate the destruction of the wicked, is that of torrents and inundations, which descend with great noise from the mountains, and cover the face of a country; but their cause soon ceasing to act, they run off and appear no more; herein affording a fine emblem of the weakness and instability of earthly power. The impotence of human efforts against divine counsels is compared, thirdly, to a man drawing a bow, when the arrow on the string is broken in two; and therefore, instead of flying to the mark, falls useless at his feet.

8. *As a snail* which *melteth, let* every one of them *pass away;* like *the untimely birth of a woman,* that *they may not see the sun.* Or, *As a melting snail he shall pass away; as an abortion they see not the sun.*

A snail, which, coming forth of his shell, marks his path with slime, continually losing

* Bochart quotes several ancient authors, who mention this effect of music, and among them Virgil, Æneid, vii. v. 763.

"Vipereo generi, et graviter spirantibus hydris
Spargere qui somnos CANTU que manuque solebat."

The elder Scaliger, as quoted by the same learned critic, writes thus: "Nos aliquando vidimus cantationibus e cavernis exciri serpentes:" and Mr. Boyle, in his Essay on the Great Effects of Languid Motion, p. 71, ed. 1685, gives us the following passage, from Sir H. Blunt's Voyage into the Levant, p. 81, edit. 5: "Many rarities of living creatures I saw in Grand Cairo; but the most ingenious was a nest of four-legged serpents, of two feet long, black and ugly, kept by a Frenchman; who, when he came to handle them, they would not endure him, but ran and hid in their hole; then would he take his cittern, and play upon it; they, hearing his music, came all crawling to his feet, and began to climb up him, till he gave over playing; then away they ran." The "deaf" adder may either be a serpent of a species naturally deaf (for several such kinds are mentioned by Avicenne, as quoted by Bochart) or one deaf by accident: in either case, she may be said, in the language of poetry, to "stop her ear," from her being proof to all the efforts of the charmer. MERRICK.

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some part of his substance in his progress; and an abortion, which consumes away in the like manner: these are the fourth and fifth images, selected to represent the transient nature of worldly greatness, still wasting till it comes to nothing; and the miserable fate of those who perish, with their half-formed devices, nor ever behold the Sun of Righteousness.

9. *Before your pots can feel the thorns, he shall take them away as with a whirlwind, both living, and in* his *wrath;* or, *he shall take them away alive, as with a whirlwind, in* his *wrath.*

Wicked men have, in common with others, that tendency to decay which is entailed on the world, and on all things therein; but they are warned, by this sixth and last similitude, to prevent the judgments of the Almighty. These often break forth like a whirlwind, or a thunder-storm, and sweep away at once, in the flower of their strength, and the height of their prosperity, the tyrannical oppressors of the people of God; whose short-lived glory, and sudden extinction, are aptly resembled to that crackling and momentary blaze which is produced by a fire, kindled among thorns, under a pot.

10. *The righteous shall rejoice, when he seeth the vengeance; he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked:* 11. *So that a man shall say, Verily,* there is *a reward for the righteous: verily, he is,* or, *there is, a God that judgeth in the earth.*

The victories of that JUST ONE gained in his own person and in those of his faithful servants, over the enemies of man's salvation, are productive of a joy, which springeth not from love of revenge, but is inspired by a view of the divine mercy, justice, and truth, displayed in the redemption of the elect, the punishment of the ungodly, and the accomplishment of the promises. Whoever duly weigheth and considereth these things, will diligently seek after the reward of righteousness, and humbly adore the providence, which ordereth all things aright, in heaven and earth.

ELEVENTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM LIX.

ARGUMENT.

THIS Psalm is said to have been composed on occasion of David's escape, when Saul sent, and they watched the house to kill him. See 1 Sam. xix. 11—18. David in these, as in many other circumstances of his life, may be considered as the representative of Messiah, 1, 2, praying to be delivered from the power of his blood-thirsty enemies, whose indefatigable malice he, 3—7, describes; but, 8—10, predicts his own enlargement through the tender mercy and mighty power of God; as also, 11—15, the singular vengeance to be poured out upon his enemies, for their punishment, and the admonition of others. The psalm concludes with a strain of exultation and thanksgiving.

1. *Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God; defend me,* Heb. *exalt me, from them that rise up against me.* 2. *Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, and save me from bloody men.*

In these words we hear the voice of David, when a prisoner in his own house; the voice of Christ, when surrounded by his merciless enemies; the voice of the church, when under bondage in the world; and the voice of the Christian, when under temptation, affliction, and persecution.

3. *For, lo, they lie in wait for my soul; the mighty are gathered against me: not* for *my transgression, nor* for *my sin, O* LORD. 4. *They run and prepare themselves without* my *fault; awake to help me, and behold.*

The mighty men of Saul were gathered against David, who had been guilty of no offence against the king, and therefore was, so far, innocent. The Jews and Romans were gathered against Jesus Christ, who had committed no sin at all, and was perfectly innocent. And the world is oftentimes in arms against the children of God, only for doing what it is their duty to do. In all such cases, God is to be applied to, as the helper and avenger of those who suffer unjustly.

5. *Thou, therefore, O* LORD *God of hosts, the God of Israel awake,* or, *thou shalt awake, to visit all the heathen: be not merciful,* or *thou wilt not be merciful, to any wicked transgressors.*

The prophet, in this verse, seemeth to respect that great day of final retribution, which is to succeed the day of grace, the accepted time of repentance and pardon. For then it is that Jehovah shall awake, to judge the nations; to reward every man according to his deeds; and to banish forever, from his presence, the impenitent workers of iniquity.—The malicious adversaries of David, and those of the son of David, may not then find the mercy, so often by them rejected, in the days of their flesh.

6. *They return at evening; they make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city.*

The emissaries of Saul, coming after David in the "evening," besetting his house, and blocking up the avenues, are compared to a set of hungry blood-hounds in quest of their prey. But the picture is drawn likewise for that herd of evening wolves who thirsted af-

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ter the blood of the Lamb of God, on whom their mouths were opened, crying, "Crucify him! crucify him!"

7. *Behold, they belch*, or, *spout, out with their mouth; swords* are *in their lips, for who*, say they, *doth hear*?

Out of the abundance of malice in the heart, the mouth will speak like the cutting of a sword; and the wicked take counsel against the just, as if there were no one above who heard and regarded.

8. *But thou, O* LORD, *shalt laugh at them; thou shalt have all the heathen in derision.*

These very expressions are used in the 4th verse of the 2d Psalm, to denote the futility of all the counsels entered into, by Jew and Gentile, against Messiah and his church. The Psalm before us seems evidently to relate to the same counsels, against the same blessed Person, whatever part of king David's history might be the occasion of its being composed.

9. Because of *his strength will I wait upon thee; for God* is *my defence*, or, *exaltation.* 10. *The God of my mercy shall prevent me; God shall let me see* my desire, Heb. *look upon mine enemies.*

To the strength of the adversary the Psalmist opposeth that of God, which he foresaw would rescue him, and avenge his cause. In all our troubles let us do likewise; and then, he who exalted David, and a greater than David, will in due time, exalt us, and we shall look, without fear, upon our spiritual enemies.

11. *Slay them not, lest my people forget; scatter them by thy power, and bring them down, O* LORD, *our shield.* Or, *Thou wilt not slay them—thou wilt scatter them*, &c.

The prophet, in the person of Messiah, predicteth the singular fate of the Jews; who for their sins, were not extirpated, lest the Gentile Christians should "forget" their punishment, but were "scattered" among all nations, and degraded from the glorious privileges of that high rank in which they once stood.* Thus doth that people remain, at this day, a monument of God's vengeance against apostasy; a beacon, set up, and kindled by the hand of heaven, as a warning to all Christian churches, that they split not on the same fatal rock.

12. For *the sin of their mouth* and *the words of their lips, let them*, or, *they shall even be taken in their pride: and for cursing and lying* which *they speak.*

The causes of the Jews' dispersion are here assigned, viz. "the sin of their mouth" in the "words of their lips," or their "hard speeches" spoken against the Son of God; their slanders, lying accusations, and outrageous blasphemies, together with that horrid imprecation in which they involved their descendants; who have groaned under the weight of it for near these 1700 years, and yet still continue to justify the deeds of their fathers retaining that "pride" in their name, and long since forfeited privileges, which provoked the Romans to destroy their city and country.

13. *Consume* them *in thy wrath, consume* them, or, *thou shalt consume* them, &c. *that they* may *not*, or, *shall not*, be; *and let them*, or, *they shall, know that God ruleth in Jacob unto the ends of the earth.*

This prediction was accomplished in the total subversion of Jerusalem by Titus, when the Jews having no longer any city, temple, or civil polity, ceased to "be," as a nation. And they have seen enough to have convinced them, that God is the God, "not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also." The Gospel hath been preached, idolatry hath been overthrown, the nations have been converted to the faith of Abraham, and that of David, whose Psalms are used throughout the world; and God, who "ruled in Jacob, and was known in Jewry," now is known and ruleth "unto the ends of the earth;" for they "have seen the salvation," and submitted to the sceptre of king Messiah.

14. *And at evening let them*, or, *they shall, return*; and *let them*, or, *they shall, make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city*, 15. *Let them*, or, *they shall, wander up and down for meat, and grudge*, or, *howl, if they be not satisfied.*

The punishment inflicted on the wicked often carries the mark of their crime. It is just that they who have thirsted after the blood of the righteous, should want a drop of water to cool their tongues; and the hunger of a dog is deservedly their plague, of whom a resemblance of that unclean animal's disposition hath been the sin. Such is the present condition of the Jews, excluded from the church, and suffering all the calamities of a spiritual famine; and such will be the condition of all those who are to wail and lament in vain, without the holy city, for evermore. Rev. xxii. 15.

16. *But I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning: for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble.* 17. *Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing: for God* is *my defence*, and *the God of my mercy.*

While the wicked murmur and repine at the dispensations of Heaven, the righteous are employed in giving thanks and praises for

* Prophetice, Christiani divinæ ultionis oblivisci non possunt, dum Judæi, excidio suo superstites, et ubique vagi, pœnam suam, et pariter, in testimonium, loequia divina circumferunt. BOSSUET.

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the same; and the "morning" which is to consign the former to the habitations of despair, where no sounds are heard but those of hideous wailings and horrid blasphemies, shall transport the latter to the mansions of felicity, resounding with incessant hallelujahs.

PSALM LX.

ARGUMENT.

THIS Psalm is thought to have been composed by David, when, after his coming to the throne, the tribes of Israel had submitted to his sceptre, and he was engaged in the reduction of the adjacent countries. See the history, 2 Sam. chap. v. and viii. 1—3, he describes what Israel had lately suffered from foreign enemies, and domestic feuds; 4, 5, 6, he declareth himself appointed to conduct his people to victory and triumph, according to a divine prediction; 6, 7, he rejoiceth in the accession of the other tribes to that of Judah, and, 8—12, sees Edom, Moab, and Philistia, already subdued by the mighty power of God. All this is now to be spiritually applied, in the Christian church, to the establishment and enlargement of Messiah's kingdom, prefigured by that of David.

1. *O God, thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered us, thou hast been displeased; O turn thyself to us again.*

When the church, by her sins, hath rejected God, she is rejected by him; she is delivered into the hands of her enemies, and suffers persecution: when, by repentance and supplication, she returneth to him, he is ready to meet and receive her. The history of Israel is one continued exemplification of these most interesting truths. It should be the care and endeavour of every church, and every individual, to profit thereby.

2. *Thou hast made the earth,* or, *the land, to tremble; thou hast broken it; heal the breaches thereof, for it shaketh.*

The persecutions of the Israelitish church often shook the "land" of promise; the persecutions of the Christian church have frequently moved the whole earth. Afflictions of this kind may be likened to wounds sometimes made in a diseased body, by skilful surgeons to be healed again, when, by a discharge of the corrupt humors, they have answered the end for which they were intended.

3. *Thou hast showed thy people hard things; thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment,* or *intoxication.*

The Israelites had not only suffered "hard things" from their professed enemies the Philistines, by the overthrow of Saul and his army, but their civil dissensions at home showed that they had drunk deep of the bitter cup of infatuation. See 1 Sam. xxxi. and 2 Sam. ii. and iii. From these two sources flow the calamities of churches and of kingdoms in all ages, whensoever it pleaseth God to visit their transgressions upon them by the instrumentality of men.

4. *Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth.*

For the temporal salvation of Israel, God raised up David, according to his promise; to whose standard, as a centre of unity, the worshippers of the true God might resort. For the spiritual and eternal salvation of the church, God raised up his Son Jesus, according to his promise, and "displayed the banner of the cross," under which believers are enlisted, and led on to triumph, "because of the truth." Remarkable to this purpose are the words of Isaiah: "In that day there shall be A ROOT OF JESSE, which shall stand for an ENSIGN of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest," after the battle is over, and the victory gained, "shall be glorious." Isa. xi. 10.

5. *That thy beloved may be delivered, save* with *thy right hand, and hear me.*

This prayer, which king David preferred for Israel, the great Intercessor prefers continually for his church; and all ought to prefer for themselves and for others.

6. *God hath spoken in his holiness,* or *by his Holy One, I will rejoice,* or, *exult,* i. e. *as a conqueror; I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth.*

As a ground of hope and confidence, David here declares, that God, by the mouth of an holy prophet, had spoken and promised him the success for which he prayed in the foregoing verse. And that this was known among the people, appears from a speech of Abner to the elders of Israel, 2 Sam. iii. 18. "The LORD hath spoken of David, saying, by the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies." Having therefore, mentioned this prediction, much of which was already accomplished, he exults as a conqueror, resolving to divide into districts, and portion out under proper officers, the country about Samaria, now become his own.

7. *Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine; Ephraim also is the strength of my head; Judah is my lawgiver.*

"Gilead, Manasseh, Ephraim," and the other tribes of Israel, upon the death of Ishbosheth the son of Saul, whom Abner had set over them, joined the royal tribe of Judah,

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and came in, with one accord, to the house of David. See 2 Sam. ii. 8. and v. 1. "Ephraim," as a tribe abounding in valiant men, is styled by its prince, "the strength of his head," or the support of his life and kingdom; and "Judah," as the seat of empire, replenished with men of wisdom and understanding, qualified to assist the throne by their salutary counsels, is dignified with the title of "lawgiver." Thus are the tribes of the spiritual "Israel" subject to Messiah, and serve him in various capacities, as the Spirit furnishes different men with different powers; some being endued with zeal and fortitude, to labor and suffer; others with knowledge and discretion, to instruct and govern.

8. *Moab is my washpot; over Edom will I cast out*, or, *extend, my shoe; Philistia, triumph thou because of me;* Heb. *Over Philistia give a shout of triumph.* The parallel passage, Ps. cviii. 9, has it—*Over Philistia I will give a shout of triumph.*

After having mentioned the submission of the Israelitish tribes to his sceptre, David predicts the extension of his kingdom over the neighboring nations, those inveterate enemies of the people of God; such as the Moabites, the Edomites, and, above all, the Philistines. The absolute reduction of these nations under his dominion, is expressed metaphorically, by the phrases of "making them his washpot, and extending his shoe, i. e. setting his foot" upon them. The Son of David also must "reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet." 1 Cor. xv. 25. And the Christian, in these words, now declareth his hope of being enabled to do the same; to conquer through his Lord, and to triumph with him.

9. *Who will bring me into the strong city? Who will lead me* into *Edom?*

Bozrah the capital of Idumea, or "Edom," was a fortified town, situated on a rock deemed impregnable. See Obad. ver. 3. Considering therefore the strength of the adversary, David, by this question, acknowledgeth his own impotency, and the need he had of superior aid, in order to achieve this important conquest. How great need, then, have we of an Almighty Saviour, who may enable us to overcome our last and strongest enemy, death! And it is very remarkable, that Christ's victory over this very enemy is set forth, by the prophet Isaiah, under the striking image of a king of Israel, returning in triumph from the reduction of Idumea. "Who is this, that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah," &c. Isa. lxiii. 1. The reader will be no less entertained than instructed, by a discourse of Bishop Andrews on this subject, being the seventeenth of his Sermons on Easter-day.

10. Wilt *not thou, O God*, which *hadst cast us off*? *and* thou, *O God*, which *didst not go out with our armies?*

The question in the last verse, "Who will bring me into Edom?" is here answered by another question, "Wilt not thou, O God" &c. that is, To whom can we have recourse, for assistance, but to thee, O God? Deserted by thee, we fall; but do thou go forth with us, and we shall again rise superior to every enemy. So saith the Christian soldier: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of Eternal life;" "Thou hast overcome the sharpness of death, and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers."

11. *Give us help from trouble; for vain* is *the help of man.* 12. *Through God we shall do valiantly; for he* it is that *shall tread down our enemies.*

David, like a wise and pious prince, acknowledgeth the weakness of the fleshly arm, and strengthened himself in the Lord his God. Much more ought we to confess the impotence of nature, and to implore the succors of grace; that so we may happily accomplish our spiritual warfare, tread Satan under our feet, and triumph finally over the last enemy, death himself.

PSALM LXI.

ARGUMENT.

In the person of David, for a while driven into exile, and then restored to his kingdom, we here behold the church, or any member thereof, 1, 2, 3, preferring a petition for deliverance from the troubles and temptations of this mortal state; 4, 5, expressing faith and hope in God; 6, 7, praying for the prosperity and perpetuity of Messiah's kingdom; and, 8, resolving to praise God evermore for the same.

1. *Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer.* 2. *From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed; lead me to the rock* that *is higher than I.*

The church, extended far and wide among the nations, crieth aloud unto God, by the prayers of its members, even "from the end," or utmost parts, "of the earth." The world is to Christians a sea of troubles and temptations, from which they daily beseech God to deliver them, and to place them on the "rock" of their salvation; which rock is Christ.—Grounded on him, by faith in his sufferings and exaltation, we may defy all the storms and tempests that can be raised against us by the adversary, while, as from the top of a lofty mountain on the shore, we behold the waves dashing themselves in pieces beneath us.

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3. *For thou hast hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy.*

Meditation on God our Saviour, as set forth in the Scriptures, will ever prove, to the believer, "a strong tower" or fortress, in which he will be safe from the darts of the enemy, and will be furnished with impregnable arguments, wherewith to oppose and blunt the force of every temptation which Satan can launch against his soul.

4. *I will abide in thy tabernacle forever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings.*

They who sojourn in the "tabernacle" of the church militant on earth, and continue faithful members of the same, shall take up their eternal residence in that permanent "temple," the church triumphant in heaven. Below, they are protected by the all-shadowing "wing" of God's fatherly providence; above, they will be rewarded with the all-illuminating vision of his glorious presence.

5. *For thou, O God, hast heard my vows; thou hast given* me *the heritage of those that fear thy name.*

The "vows" of David, made during his banishment, were heard, and he was restored to the possession of his kingdom, in that land which God gave to his people, for an "heritage." The vows of Messiah, made in the days of his pilgrimage, were heard, and he hath re-assumed his ancient throne in the heavenly Jerusalem. The prayers of the faithful, made in the land where they are in exile, are heard, and their spirits shall return to God, who will "give them the heritage of those that fear his name."

6. *Thou wilt prolong the king's life;* and *his years as many generations.* 7. *He shall abide before God forever: O prepare mercy and truth,* which *may preserve him.* Or, 6. *Thou wilt add days to the days of the king: his years as generation and generation.* 7. *He shall dwell before God forever; mercy and truth shall preserve him.*

These words must be applied to Him, of whom it was said by the angel, "The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end:" Luke, i. 32. The ancient church prayed for "his" exaltation and glory, under those of his representative; nay, the Chaldee paraphrast expounds this passage of Messiah only: "Thou shalt add days to the days of King Messias; his years shall be as the generation of this world, and of the world to come." Nor can a better paraphrase be easily devised.

8. *So will I sing praise unto thy name for ever, that I may daily perform my vows.*

For the preservation and prosperity, the exaltation, the power, and the everlasting glory of Christ's kingdom, with all the benefits and blessings thereof, we are bound to sing praise unto God's holy name for ever, and daily to perform the vows made in baptism, that we would believe in him, and serve him, all the days of our life; until the blessed day shall dawn, which no night is to follow, when faith shall end in vision, and duty be resolved into praise.

TWELFTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM LXII.

ARGUMENT.

THIS Psalm containeth, 1, 2, a resolution to trust in God alone; 3, 4, a denunciation of judgment against the persecutors of the Just One; 5—7, a repeated act of faith, and resolution to trust in God, with, 8, an exhortation to all nations to do the same; and that 9, 10, because there is no confidence to be placed in man, or in the world; but only, 11, in the divine power, and, 12, mercy.

1. *Truly my soul waiteth,* or, *resteth, upon God: from him* cometh *my salvation.* 2. *He only* is *my rock, and my salvation;* he is *my defence,* Heb. *high place; I shall not be greatly moved.*

David, in the midst of trouble, and perhaps tempted to have recourse to sinful expedients for his preservation, determines still to repose all his confidence on the promised mercy of him who is the "salvation," the "rock," and the "high place," or fortress, of men. Christ would not be delivered from his sufferings, by any other means than those which the Father had ordained. The church, in like manner, should patiently wait for the salvation of God, and not attempt, through distrust of the divine mercy, to save herself by unwarrantable methods, of her own devising.

3. *How long will ye imagine mischief against a man? Ye shall be slain all of you: as a bowing wall* shall ye be, and *as a tottering fence.*

From a declaration of his trust in God, the prophet passeth to an expostulation with his enemies, for continually plotting against him; and fortelleth, that their destruction will happen suddenly and irremediably, like the downfall of a wall that is out of the perpendicular, or a stone fence, the parts of which are not cemented together. See Isa. xxx. 13. How striking is this expostulation, and this prediction, if considered as addressed by Messiah to his implacable enemies!

4. *They only consult to cast* him *down from his excellency; they delight in lies;*

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they bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly.

The adversaries of David "consulted" how to deprive him of those honors to which God designed to exalt him; the Scribes and Pharisees took counsel against Jesus, with the same intent; and to rob the Christian of the glory and immortality prepared for him, is the end of every temptation which the enemy throws in his way, whether it be of the terrifying, or, which oftener succeeds, the flattering, alluring, and deceiving kind.

5 *My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him.* 6. *He only is my rock and my salvation:* he is *my defence, or, high place; I shall not be moved.* 7. *In God is my salvation, and my glory; the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God.*

The consideration suggested in the preceding verse, namely, that the enemy is ever intent upon our ruin, should stir us up, after the prophet's example, to renew our faith, and strengthen ourselves yet more and more, continually, in the Lord our God, who alone giveth victory, salvation, and glory.

8. *Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your hearts before him: God is a refuge for us.*

The comforts which David had found, he exhorteth others to seek, in faith and prayer; in such a faith as fixeth itself on God, when the whole world is against it; and such prayer as poureth forth all the desires of the soul into the bosom of the Almighty. How often, in repeating the Psalms, do we declare, that "God is our refuge;" yet how very seldom do we recur to him, as such, in the hour of temptation!

9. *Surely men of low degree* are *vanity*, and *men of high degree* are *a lie; to be laid in the balance, they* are *altogether* lighter *than vanity.*

A reason is here assigned, why we should at all times "trust in God:" namely, because there is nothing else, in which we can trust, but it will in the end deceive us. Weighed in the "balance" of heaven, the power of man to save, is "less than nothing." Let us weigh every thing in that exact and faithful balance.

10. *Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery; if riches increase, set not your heart* upon them.

Of all things here below, wealth is that on which poor deluded man is chiefly tempted, even to the end of life, to place his confidence; and when "riches increase," it proves a hard task for the human heart to keep its affections sufficiently detached from them. But he who by injustice acquireth the earthly mammon, justly forfeiteth the treasures of heaven; and he who is made vain and covetous by money, however honestly gotten, renders that a curse to one, which was designed as a blessing to many, and drowns himself in the spring which should have watered all around him.

11. *God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this,* or, *these two things have I heard; that power* belongeth *unto God.* 12. *Also unto thee, O* LORD, belongeth *mercy; for thou renderest to every man according to his work.*

In opposition to the vain boasts of worldly men, trusting in their riches, &c. is cited the declaration of God, when, from Mount Sinai, he proclaimed himself to be JEHOVAH, the fountain of all "power," in heaven above, and on earth beneath, jealous of the glory of this attribute, ready to avenge himself on the wicked, and able to abase the pride of man. At the same time also, he proclaimed himself "the LORD God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin:" Exod. xxxiv. 6. To all mankind, therefore, the prophet here recommendeth meditation on these two most interesting subjects, the "power" of God to punish sin, and his "mercy" to pardon it. Fear of the former will beget desire of the latter, and both together will set a man upon doing works worthy of their parent faith; works, which God, of his infinite "mercy," for the sake of Christ, has graciously promised to accept, and to "reward."

PSALM LXIII.

ARGUMENT.

DAVID in the wilderness of Judah, expresseth, 1, 2, his longing desire after the presence of God, and the divine pleasures of the sanctuary; 3—6, he blesseth and praiseth God both day and night, in the midst of affliction, and, 7, 8, declareth his faith to be immovable; 9, 10, he predicteth the fate of the wicked, with, 11, the exaltation, triumph, and glory of Messiah, to be exhibited in his own. The whole Psalm is applicable to the circumstances of Christ in the flesh, and to those of his people in the world.

1. *O God, thou* art *my God; early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is: 2. To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.*

After the example of the persecuted David in the wilderness of Judah, and that of the afflicted Jesus upon earth, the true Christian dedicates to God "the sweet hour of prime;"

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he opens the eyes of his understanding, together with those of his body, and awakes, each morning, to righteousness. He arises, with an inextinguishable thirst after those comforts which the world cannot give; and has immediate recourse, by prayer, to the fountain of the water of life; ever longing to behold the divine power and glory, in the sanctuary above, of which he has been favored with some glimpse in the services of the church below.

3. *Because thy loving kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.*

"Life" is the greatest of earthly blessings, all others being included in it: "all that a man hath," saith Satan, "will he give for his life:" Job ii. 4. Not so the Psalmist. He knew a pearl of far greater price, namely, the "loving kindness" of Jehovah, on which is suspended not only the life which now is, but that which is to come. The sense of this loving kindness tuned the harp of the son of Jesse, and now tunes those of the spirits before the throne.

4. *Thus will I bless thee while I live; I will lift up my hands in thy name.*

"While we live," however wretched our condition may be, we have an opportunity of obtaining pardon, grace, and glory; for which we ought, at all times, "to bless" God, "lifting up pure hands" in prayer, employing them in every good work, and all in the "name" of Jesus.

5. *My soul shall be satisfied as* with *marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise* thee *with joyful lips:* 6. *When I remember thee upon my bed,* and *meditate on thee in the* night *watches.*

Solitude and stillness render the "night watches" a fit season for meditation on the so often experienced mercies of God; which, when thus called to remembrance, become a delicious repast to the spirit filling it with all joy, and peace, and consolation; giving songs in the night and making darkness itself cheerful. How cheerful, then, will be that last morning, when the righteous, awaking up after the divine likeness, shall be "satisfied" with all the fulness of God, and "praise him with joyful lips," in those eternal courts, where there is no night, and from whence sorrow and sighing fly far away!

7. *Because thou hast been my help, therefore under the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.* 8. *My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me.*

Recollection of past mercies inclines the soul to put herself under the "wing" of an all-shadowing Providence. Should her Redeemer, for a time, seem to be deserting her, faith constrains her to "follow hard after him," as a child doth after the father; and not to let go the "hand" which hath so often "upholden" her from falling.

9. *But those* that *seek my soul to destroy* it, *shall go into the lower parts of the earth.* 10. *They shall fall by the sword; they shall be a portion for foxes.*

The enemies of Jehovah, and his Anointed, if they come not to a violent death, an early grave, or to have their carcasses devoured by the beasts of the field (as hath sometimes been the case,) yet, in an after-state, their condition will certainly be deplorable. Their habitation must be in the "pit;" their punishment, the flaming "sword" of almighty vengeance; and their companions, those crafty and malicious ones, who, having contributed to seduce, will help to torment them.

11. *But the king shall rejoice in God; every one that sweareth by him shall glory: but the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped.*

If David found cause to rejoice in God, who gave him the victory over all his enemies; if the subjects of David might well glory in their king; if the slanderers of David were put to silence, at beholding him exalted to the throne of Israel; how much greater is the joy of Messiah in the Godhead, giving the manhood victory over his enemies, sin, death, and hell; how much rather may his subjects and worshippers glory in their triumphant King; and how much more shall the blasphemers of such a Saviour be everlastingly confounded, when they shall behold him invested with all the power and majesty of the Father, and seated on the throne of judgment! Surely, THEN, "the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped."

PSALM LXIV.

ARGUMENT.

DAVID, in the person of Messiah, 1, 2, prayeth to be delivered from his enemies, from their counsels and insurrections; 3, 4, he describeth their calumnies and slanders, their scoffs and blasphemies, and, 5, 6, their indefatigable malice; predicting, 7—9, their astonishing fall, with, 10, the exaltation of the church, in God her Saviour.

1. *Hear my voice, O God, in my prayer, preserve my life from fear of the enemy.*

The prophet, after beseeching God to hear him, prefers his petition, which is, to be "preserved from fear of the enemy." A petition of this kind is granted, either by a removal of the ground of fear, when the enemy's power to hurt is taken from him, or his will changed; or else, by an extirpation

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of the fear itself, through the increase of faith, charity, and fortitude. For the former let us pray conditionally, "if it may be done, and if it is God's will that it should be done," as Christ prayed against the bitter cup in the garden; for the latter we may pray absolutely; since a victory, gained by the fear of God over the fear of man, is a necessary step, and a happy prelude, to a full and final triumph over every enemy of our salvation.

2. *Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked; from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity.*

The "counsels and insurrections" of the Israelites against David; of the same people, afterwards against the Son of David; of worldly and wicked men against the church; and of the powers of darkness against us all, are here, respectively, understood to be deprecated.

3. *Who whet their tongue like a sword,* and *bend* their bows to shoot *their arrows,* even *bitter words;* 4. *That they may shoot in secret at the perfect: suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not.*

In personal scoffings and revilings, the tongue performs the part of a "sword," which is a weapon that can be used only in open rencounters: but "bitter words," spoken in secret, and at a distance from him who is the subject of them, are like "arrows," which may be shot from an obscure and remote corner, and therefore cannot be warded off. The tongue, in both these capacities, was employed against that PERFECT ONE, the holy Jesus, in the days of his flesh. Would to God it had never been since employed against him and his disciples, or by his disciples against each other!

5. *They encourage themselves* in *an evil matter; they commune of laying snares privily; they say, Who shall see them?*

Sin doth not often appear abroad without a veil; and the more atrocious the sin, the more specious must be the pretence which is to cover it. Envy and malice crucified the Son of God; but, during the course of the proceedings against him, you hear only of zeal for the law, and loyalty to Cæsar. Such are the "snares," set by the crafty, to deceive the simple and unwary; without considering that the broad eye of heaven, all the time, surveys their most secret devices, by which they impose upon others, and frequently upon themselves.

6. *They search out iniquities; they accomplish a diligent search; both the inward* thought *of every one* of them, *and the heart, is deep.*

Truth and righteousness may be found, and practised, with half the pains that are often employed to "search out iniquity," and establish error. The Jews could not accomplish the death of Christ, without counsels, stratagems, and subornations, "deep" and dark as hell itself: all which trouble they might have saved themselves at once, by believing on him. The case is the same with virtue and vice; and honesty is the readiest, as well as the best policy.

7. *But God shall shoot at them* with *an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded.* 8. *So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves: all that see them shall flee away.*

While the enemies of the "Just One" were shooting in secret at him, he that dwelleth in the heavens was levelling an arrow at them, and one which would not fail to take place. It accordingly did so; and the direful imprecations of "their own tongues fell," in unexampled vengeance, on the heads of them, and their children, who continued to justify the deeds of their fathers. All would "flee away" from the punishment of Jerusalem; let all, then, depart from the sins which occasioned it.

9. *And all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God; for they shall wisely consider of his doing.*

It is remarkable that the desolation of the once holy and beloved city filled "all men with fear" and astonishment, forcing them to acknowledge and "declare" it to be the "work of God." Even Titus, the Roman emperor, confessed, that he had fought, and conquered, by the favor, and under the direction, of Heaven. O that men would "wisely consider" of this, and other wonderful works of the Almighty!

10. *The righteous shall be glad in the* LORD, *and shall trust in him; and all the upright in heart shall glory.*

As sorrow, sooner or later, will be the portion of Messiah's enemies, so joy is the high privilege of his friends and disciples. The "righteous" man alone can be truly "glad," because he alone can be "glad in the Lord" Jesus, the object of all his confidence. There was light in Goshen, when darkness covered the Egyptians; the Christian church drank the cup of salvation, when that of vengeance was mingled for Jerusalem; and when the empire of Satan shall fall, heaven will resound with hallelujahs.

TWELFTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM LXV.

ARGUMENT.

IN this very lovely song of SION, the prophet treats, 1, of the praise due to Jehovah, for, 2, his mercy in hearing the prayers of his

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servants, and, 3, in redeeming them from their sins; 4, he declareth the blessedness of the elect in Christ their head; 5, predicteth the wonderful things which God would do for the salvation of men, by that power which, 6, 7, established the mountains, and confined the sea within its bounds; 8, foretelleth the conversion of the nations; and, 9—13, describeth the blessed effects of the Spirit poured out upon the church, under the figure of rain, descending upon a dry ground.

1. *Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion; and unto thee shall the vow be performed.*

The obligations of "praise and thanksgiving" were formerly offered, and all "vows" were paid, in the temple on Mount "Sion." At Jerusalem was performed the promise of man's redemption by the sacrifice of the Son of God; since which event, and the call of the Gentiles, the Christian church has been the holy city and temple. In our communion, WE are to offer up our devotions, and to perform the vow made in baptism; until we come to the heavenly Sion, to pay our vows, with the church triumphant, in everlasting hymns of praise.

2. *O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.*

The prophet here foretels, that, on account of God's mercy, in hearing the prayers of his people, "all flesh," that is, all mankind, out of every nation, should "come" at his gracious call, and make their supplications before him in his church. And to whom should "all flesh come," but to him that "heareth prayer?"

3. *Iniquities prevail against me; as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.*

The chief subject of the prayers, made by all flesh to God, is the forgiveness of sin; in order to which it must be confessed. The verse, therefore, consisteth of two parts. First, an acknowledgment of guilt, "Iniquities prevail against me;" like whereunto is St. Paul's complaint, "O wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me from this body of death!" The second part of the verse intimates an assurance of pardon, through the blood of the Lamb. "As for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away;" exactly corresponding to the answer, which the apostle returneth to himself; "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord:" Rom. vii. 25.

4. *Blessed* is the man whom *thou choosest, and causest to approach* unto thee, that *he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house,* even *of thy holy temple.*

Blessed are they who are chosen out of the world, and admitted to the privileges of the church: still more blessed are they, who are chosen out of the congregation to stand continually in the presence of God, and to minister in his courts; but blessed, above all blessing and praise, is the man Christ Jesus, elect, precious, chosen of God to be an high priest for ever; to make intercession for his people in the courts of heaven; that where he is, they may be also. Then shall we indeed be satisfied with the "pleasures of thy house, O Lord, even of thy holy temple."

5. By *terrible*, or, *wonderful things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation:* who art *the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off* upon *the sea.*

The ancient church foretelleth, that God would "answer" her prayers for the coming of Messiah, "by wonderful things in righteousness;" which was brought to pass, by the death and resurrection of Christ, the overthrow of idolatry, and the converson of the nations. Then "the God of salvation" became "the confidence of all the ends of the earth," and the inhabitants of the most distant "island" believed in Jesus. By "wonderful things in righteousness," will the prayers of the church, which now is, be answered at the second manifestation of the Son of God, in the glory of his Father.

6. *Which by his strength setteth fast the mountains* being *girded with power;* 7. *Which stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people.*

That power which originally fixed the foundations of the "mountains," and which, from time to time, controls the "waves" of the sea, is engaged in the support and preservation of the church; and will never suffer the "waves" of this troublesome world to overwhelm the "mountain of his holiness."

8. *They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at thy tokens; thou makest the out goings of the morning and evening to rejoice.*

The "tokens," or signs, mentioned in this verse, are the exertions of divine power and mercy, called above, "wonderful things in righteousness;" which, at the publication of the Gospel, produced a saving "fear" of God among the nations, "dwelling in the uttermost parts of the earth." "The isles," saith Isaiah on the same occasion, "saw it, and feared; the ends of the earth were afraid; they drew near and came:" Isa. xli. 5. And then it was that "the outgoings of the morning and evening," all the inhabitants of the earth, as many as experienced the sweet

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vicissitudes of day and night, of morning and evening, were "made to rejoice" in God their Saviour; whose name was praised, from the rising to the setting sun.

9. *Thou visitest the earth, and waterest* it; *thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God*, which *is full of water: thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it;* or, *for so thou hast established*, or, *constituted, it.*

Under the beautiful image of a once barren and dry land, rendered fruitful by kindly showers of rain, turning earth into plenteousness, are represented here (as in Isa. xxxv. and numberless other places) the gracious "visitation" of the church by the Spirit; the "riches" of grace and mercy, poured upon the hearts of men, from the exhaustless "river of God;" and the bountiful provision made thereby for the relief of that spiritual famine which had been sore in all lands. See Isa. lv. 10. Rev. xxii. 1. Amos, viii. 11.

10. *Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: thou settlest the furrows thereof: thou makest it soft with showers: thou blessest the spring thereof.*

After the ground is ploughed up, the former rain, descending upon the "ridges," and into the "furrows," dissolveth the parts of the earth, and so fitteth it for the purpose of vegetation, whenever the seed shall be cast into it: then cometh the rain, to assist, and to "bless the spring" and increase thereof, unto a joyful harvest. Thus doth the good Spirit of God both prepare the hearts of his people for the reception of the word, and also enable them to bear fruit, bringing forth "some an hundred fold, some sixty, some thirty." Matt. xiii. 23.

11. *Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy paths*, or, *clouds*, or, *heavens, drop fatness.*

The herbs, fruits, and flowers, produced by the earth, are here finely represented, as a beautifully variegated "crown," set upon her head, by the hands of her great Creator; at whose command, the heavens, by collecting and distilling the drops of rain, impregnate her, and make her the parent of terrestial blessings. It is the same God who will crown with everlasting goodness the acceptable year, the year of his redeemed; when the Spirit shall have accomplished his work; when God shall be glorified in his saints; and heaven, as well as earth, shall be full of the goodness of Jehovah.

12. *They drop* upon *the pastures of the wilderness; and the little hills rejoice on every side;* or, *are girded about with gladness.*

As the rain, which decendeth fron heaven, causeth even the barren wilderness to become a green pasture, and investeth the naked hills with the garments of joy and gladness; so the Spirit, when poured out from on high upon the Gentile world, converted that "wilderness" into a "fruitful field;" while the churches, there rising on all sides, like little fertile "hills, rejoiced" with joy unspeakable and full of glory. See Isa. xxxii. 15. xxxv. 1, 2.

13. *The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing.*

The happy effects of God's visiting the earth with rain, are valleys covered with corn, verdant meads, and thriving flocks. All these ideas, in the prophetical Scriptures, are frequently transferred to the times of refreshment and consolation, of peace and fruitfulness, in the church; which breaks forth into joy, in the one case, as the world is always ready to do, in the other. Manifold and marvellous, O Lord, are thy works, whether of nature or of grace; surely, in wisdom and loving kindness hast thou made them all; the earth, in every sense, is full of thy riches!

PSALM LXVI.

ARGUMENT.

In this Psalm the prophet, 1, 2, exciteth all the world to sing the praises of God; 3, 4, the power and universality of his kingdom; 5—12, the deliverance of the church from various afflictions and temptations; for which, 13—15, we are to offer the sacrifices which had been vowed; 16—19, to declare the mercies and loving kindnesses of the Lord towards us; and, 20, to bless his holy name continually.

1. *Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands*, or, *all the earth: 2. Sing forth the honors of his name; make his praise glorious.*

"The holy church, throughout all the world," is here called upon to lift up her voice, like the jubilee trumpet of old, in thanksgiving; to celebrate that NAME, which is above every name; and to make the praise of JESUS glorious, both by word and deed; that so others, hearing our voices, and seeing our works, may be led to glorify him, in like manner.

3. *Say unto God, How terrible* art thou in *thy works! through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee.*

The subjects proposed are the various and awful manifestations of divine "power;" of that power which made, and which continues to support, the world: which overthrows, and raises up, empires; which subverted the

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kingdom of Satan, established that of Christ, and caused its enemies either to relinquish, or dissemble their hostility. Happy the man whose heart and affections unfeignedly "submit themselves" to the sceptre of Messiah!

4. *All the earth shall worship thee and, shall sing unto thee; they shall sing to thy name.*

What David spake in the future, the church now speaketh in the present tense—"All the earth doth worship thee, the Father everlasting—Day by day we magnify thee; and we worship thy name ever world without end." A day is coming when this shall be the case, in an unlimited sense of the words; when Jews and Gentiles, quick and dead, heaven and earth, shall compose one perfect and truly harmonious choir.

5. *Come, and see the works of God:* he is *terrible* in his *doing toward the children of men.* 6. *He turned the sea into dry land: they went through the flood on foot: there did we rejoice in him.*

The prophet, after inviting men to contemplate the "works of God," sets before them, for that purpose, two great miracles wrought for Israel; namely, the division of the Red Sea, and that of the river Jordan; by the former they escaped Egypt, by the latter they entered Canaan. Under these two figurative transactions, the Christian church beholds, and, in the words which describe them, she celebrates, two corresponding works of mercy wrought for her; namely, the deliverance of her children from the dominion of sin, by the waters of baptism; and their admission into the kingdom of heaven, through the grave and gate of death. If the Israelites rejoiced in God their Saviour, for the former blessings, much more, surely, ought we so to do, for the latter.

7. *He ruleth by his power forever; his eyes behold the nations; let not the rebellious,* or, *the rebellious shall not, exalt themselves.*

The uncontrollable sovereignty, and superintending providence of our God and King, are topics on which we should ever delight to dwell. Establish, O Lord, thy kingdom within us, and suffer not our "rebellious" passions to "exalt themselves" against it.

8. *O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard:* 9. *Who holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved.*

But chiefly are we bound to "bless" and "praise" God for that goodness and mercy, by which our feet are turned back from the ways of death, placed in the path of "life," and enabled to walk therein, without falling into perdition; until, having finished our pilgrimage in the world, we lie down in peace, and our flesh resteth sweetly in hope.

10. *For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried.*

Notwithstanding the mercy of God, and the salvation wrought for us, we are here taught to expect affliction and tribulation; which indeed are oftentimes necessary; for, having in our composition a mixture of the earth from whence we came, with a base alloy of concupiscence, we stand as much in need of adversity, as metals, in like circumstances, do of the fire, to refine and purify our tempers. Try us, O God; but enable us to stand the trial.

11. *Thou baoughtest us into the net; thou laidst affliction upon our loins.* 12. *Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and water; but thou broughtest us into a wealthy* place.

Various calamities are here mentioned, which God suffers to fall upon his people.—As first, their being "brought into the net," or ensnared and taken captive by their enemies, whom they had not power to resist or escape. Secondly, "affliction upon the loins," or hard servitude under heavy burdens.—Thirdly, "men riding over their heads," or the manifold oppressions of persecuting tyrants, trampling them under their feet, like war-horses in the day of battle. Fourthly, passing "through fire and water," or troubles of different, and contrary kinds, though alike deadly and destructive. But he who brought Israel from among the brick-kilns of Egypt, and through the waters of the Red Sea, and the river Jordan, into the promised rest, will bring us safely through every fiery trial, and through the waves of a troublesome world, to the land of everlasting peace and comfort.

13. *I will go into thy house with burnt offerings; I will pay thee my vows,* 14. *Which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble.* 15. *I will offer unto thee burnt sacrifices of fatlings, and incense of rams: I will offer bullocks with goats.*

Under the Gospel, the obligation of "going to the house of God," and there "paying vows," still continues; but the "offerings" are changed. The legal sacrifices have been abolished by the oblation of the body of Christ once for all. This oblation is commemorated in the eucharist; at the celebration of which, we now offer up our prayers and praises, ourselves, our souls and bodies, a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice, acceptable to God, in the name and through the merits of the Redeemer. These offerings if vowed in the seasons of sickness and sorrow, should be paid in the days of health and gladness.

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16. *Come* and *hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.*

Every man should be ready like David, to celebrate the mercies of God vouchsafed to him. It is a debt of gratitude to his Saviour, who is glorified; and a debt of charity to his brethren who are edified thereby; provided only, that it be done with sobriety and humility.

17. *I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue.*

The mean by which we obtain salvation, is faith; which, as it showeth us both our disease and our physician, inclineth us to pray to the latter for a cure of the former. Prayer is one gift of God; and every other gift is obtained by it.

18. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the* LORD *will not hear* me.

The prayer, which is "heard," is the prayer of the penitent, heartily grieved and wearied with sin, hating and longing to be delivered from it. For God heareth not hypocrites, who, while they outwardly disavow, yet inwardly "regard" and cherish "iniquity;" from which every one, who nameth the name of Christ, ought to depart.

19. But *verily God hath heard* me; *he hath attended to the voice of my prayer.*

David was heard, when God delivered him from his enemies, and set him on the throne of Israel: Christ was heard, when God raised him from the dead, and exalted him to the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens; and every man is heard when God raises him from sin to righteousness, as an earnest of his future resurrection from dust to glory. Let every such man praise the Lord, and say, with David in the last verse of our Psalm,

20. *Blessed* be *God, who hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.*

PSALM LXVII.

ARGUMENT.

IN this evangelical Psalm, the Israelitish church is introduced as partly praying for, and partly foretelling, the advent of Christ, and the conversion of the nations, with the joy and gladness that should be consequent thereupon. The Christian church now uses, and will continue to use, the Psalm, with propriety, until the fulness of the Gentiles shall be come in, the conversion of the Jews effected, and Christ shall appear the second time, finally to accomplish the salvation of his chosen.

1. *God be merciful unto us, and bless us;* and *cause his face to shine upon us.*

The Israelitish church, by the mouth of the prophet, expresseth her ardent desire after Messiah's advent, and appearance in the flesh; she prayeth, that God would be "merciful unto her," as he had promised; that, by so doing, he would "bless" her with the blessings of pardon and peace, of grace and glory; and in one word, that he would "cause his face to shine upon her," by the rising of the Sun of Righteousness, making her to behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, reviving her with the glad tidings of the Gospel, and enlightning her with the light of salvation.

2. *That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.*

Nor was she studious, as her degenerate children have since been, to confine the favor of heaven within her own pale. If she had a good wish for herself, she had one likewise for others; and therefore prayed that the "way" to life eternal might be "known," not in Jewry alone, but over all the "earth;" and that the virtues of that salutary medicine which was able to restore health and vigor to the diseased and languishing spirits of men might be published "among all nations."

3. *Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.*

As if she had said—Hitherto, indeed, blessed Lord, thou hast thought fit to make me the guardian and keeper of that great deposit, thy true religion, from which the nations revolted and fell; but the time is coming, when, by the gospel of thy dear Son, they shall again be called to a knowledge of thee. Thy glory, impatient, as it were, of any longer restraint, and demanding a larger sphere, shall diffuse itself, like the light of heaven, to the ends of the world. Hasten, then, O hasten the dawning of that happy day, when congregations of converted Gentiles shall every where lift up their voices, and, perhaps in the words of this very Psalm, sing to thy praise and glory!

4. *O let the nations be glad, and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth.*

And a very sufficient cause, surely, is here assigned, why the nations should "be glad, and sing for joy," upon the erection of Messiah's kingdom in the midst of them; namely, because he would "judge the people righteourly;" breaking the yoke of the oppressor, and the iron rod of the prince of this world; becoming himself an advocate in the cause of his church; introducing her into the glorious liberty of the children of God, whose service is perfect freedom; and, with a sceptre, around which justice and mercy are wreathed together, "governing the nations upon earth."

5. *Let the people praise thee, O God; let*

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all the people praise thee. Chorus repeated as above, ver. 3.

6. Then *shall the earth yield her increase;* and *God,* even *our own God, shall bless us.*

Then, when that long-expected time shall arrive, "the earth shall yield her increase;" the nations of the world shall be converted to the faith, and become fruitful in every good word and work, through the benediction of heaven upon them*.

7. *God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.*

The evangelical "blessings," predicted in this Psalm, have been long since poured out upon "the ends of the earth," by the bountiful hand of God in Christ. Let us beseech him to add yet this to all his other mercies, that, in return for such unmerited favors, the redeemed may have grace evermore to pay him the tribute of fear and obedience, of duty and love.

THIRTEENTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM LXVIII.

ARGUMENT.

THIS beautiful, sublime, and comprehensive, but very difficult, Psalm, is one of those which the church has appointed to be used on Whit-sunday. It seems evidently to have been composed on that festive and joyful occasion, the removal of the ark to Mount Sion. See 2 Sam, vi. 1 Chron. xv†. Under this figure, David, foreseeing the exaltation of Messiah, speaks of him, whom he describes, 1, 2, as arising, and vanquishing his enemies; 3—6, as causing the faithful to rejoice, and showing mercy to the afflicted; 7—15, as bringing his church out of bondage, supporting her in the world by the Word and the Spirit, purging away her corruptions, and subduing her adversaries; the ground work being laid in the history of the Egyptian deliverance, the Manna and the Law given in the wilderness, and the overthrow of the Canaanitish nations. 16—20, David returns to the scene before him, celebrates the ascension of Christ with power and great glory, to the heavenly Sion, and the gifts he should from thence pour down upon men; 21—23, fortells the vengeance he would take on his opposers; 24—28, sets forth the order of the church in her services; 29—31, predicts the conversion of the nations; all of whom, 32—35, he exhorts to unite in chanting forth the praises of their God and Saviour.

1. *Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered; let them also that hate him, flee before him.*

These words were used by Moses, whenever the ark set forward before the armies of Israel, in their progress toward Canaan: Numb. x. 35. David, in like manner, uses them in this triumphal hymn, on the removal of the ark to the city of Zion: 1 Chron. xiii. and xv. Dr. Chandler supposes this part of the Psalm, from ver. 1 to ver. 6, inclusive, to have been sung, when the ark was taken up on the shoulders of the Levites. The church now celebrates, in the same terms, the substance of the foregoing shadows; she sings the praises of her Redeemer, rising from the dead, and preceding the Israel of God, to the true land of promise; when "his enemies," the powers of darkness, sin, and death, were "scattered, and they that hated him fled before him." And the Christian, in the hour of temptation, will always find this verse a most powerful and profitable ejaculation.

2. *As smoke is driven away,* so *drive* them *away; as wax melteth before the fire,* so *let the wicked perish at the presence of God.*

The sudden and utter destruction of the enemies of God, and of his people, is resembled, first, to the dissipation of "smoke," which, though it rises from the earth in black and tremendous clouds, is by the wind presently brought to nothing; secondly, to the melting of "wax," which, though to appearance, of a firm and solid consistence, yet, when held to the fire for a few minutes, dissolves and makes no more resistance. So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord, within us. Let our vain imaginations be dispersed before thy Spirit, and our corruptions melt and die away, at the presence of thy light and thy truth.

3. *But let the righteous be glad: let them*

*Universæ gentes ad Deum convertentur, et electi abundabunt bonis operibus rerumque omnium copiâ. BOSSUET.

†The argument seems to be, a prognostication of success to David and the kingdom of Israel, and victory over their enemies, in consequence of the manifestation of the especial presence of God on Mount Sion, and his power exerted in their favor. In the mystical sense, which is authorized by St. Paul, Eph. iv. 8, it is, according to Vitringa, "Ascensio Christi in cœlos, et sessio ad dextram Patris, et illius effecta quæ sunt collectio et conservatio ecclesiæ, ac destructio hostium sibi et ecclesiæ adversorum." Bishop Lowth, in Merrick's Annotations. Dr. Chandler, in his "Critical History of the Life of David," has given an admirable exposition of the literal, or historical, sense of this Psalm, and a very ingenious division of it into five parts, founded on the supposition of its being performed at the removal of the ark. The author has been greatly assisted, in the ensuing comment, by the Doctor's exposition, and the reader will find the division of the Psalm inserted.

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rejoice before God; yea, let them exceedingly rejoice.

A variety of expressions is used in the Hebrew, to denote the festive "joy" and "delight" with which the righteous celebrate the triumphs of their God over his and their enemies, under each dispensation respectively. When the heart is full of these sensations, it has no desire to resort to the world for pleasure.

4. *Sing unto God, sing praises unto his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens: by his name* JAH, *and rejoice before him.*

The prophet exhorts the people of God to magnify, with psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, the eternal and incommunicable "name" of him "who was, and is, and is to come;" who, deriving being from none, gives it to all; and who, as Redeemer of his people, is exalted above the "heavens," and all the powers therein; above the gods of the nations; acknowledged and glorified by saints and angels; feared and trembled at by ungodly men, and evil spirits.*

5. *A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation.*

After a description of God's "majesty," the Psalmist proceeds to make mention of his "mercy" towards the afflicted Israelites, who had suffered so much, in Egypt, and in the wilderness. The cause of the "fatherless and widows" he takes into his own hands. But never did he do this in so full and extensive a manner, as when, by becoming man, he betrothed the church to himself in righteousness, and became a father to her fatherless children.

6. *God setteth the solitary in families; he bringeth out those which are bound in chains; but the rebellious dwell in a dry* land.

The "solitary," or destitute, in this verse, are the same persons with the "fatherless and widows," in the foregoing; those, as Dr. Chandler observes, whose fathers and families had been destroyed in Egypt, or fallen in the wilderness; who, therefore, were left alone, destitute of help. These God afterwards "made to sit down in families," blessed them with a numerous progeny, and the peaceable enjoyment of domestic felicity. Thus hath since been manifested the same tender care of Heaven, in calling home the wretched outcasts among the nations, and admitting them into the holy and happy family of the children of God. Another instance of God's mercy, mentioned in this verse, is that he "bringeth out those which are bound with chains," delivering his people from a spiritual, as he once did Israel from a temporal bondage. "But the rebellious," the ungodly and impenitent, "dwell in a dry land," in a spiritual desert, where no waters of life, of comfort, and salvation flow. Such is the state of the rebellious Jews at this day, like that of their murmuring predecessors in the wilderness. This allusion, says Bishop Lowth, to the deliverance from the Egyptian bondage, and the destruction of the murmurers in the desert, brings in, with great ease, the full subject of the Exodus, in the next verse.

7. *O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people; when thou didst march through the wilderness:* 8. *The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God;* even *Sinai itself* was moved *at the presence of God, the God of Israel.*

This part of the Psalm, from ver. 7, to ver. 14, is the second, in Dr. Chandler's division. It is supposed to have been sung when the procession began, and to have lasted till Mount Sion was in view. The prophet goes back to commemorate the wonders wrought for Israel, when Jehovah, by his presence in the cloudy pillar, conducted them through the wilderness: when, descending to deliver the law, he bowed the heavens, and shook the earth, and caused Sinai to quake from its foundations. The Christian church, singing this Psalm on the day of Pentecost, commemorates, under these terms and figures, her redemption from the spiritual Egypt, by the resurrection of Jesus, with mighty signs and wonders, and the succeeding delivery of the new law from Mount Sion, after the descent of the Holy Spirit; by which the old Jewish dispensation was shaken and removed, to make way for one that should last for ever. See Heb. xii. 18—28.

9. *Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful,* Heb. *a free, liberal,* or *gracious, rain, whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance, when it was weary.*

As the heavens, at the command of God, rained down manna, &c., to strengthen and refresh the well-nigh famished people, in the wilderness; so, by the descent of the Spirit from above, bringing with him the word of life, the church, in her infant and languid state, was mightily confirmed and invigorated.

10. *Thy congregation hath dwelt therein: thou, O God, hast prepared of thy goodness for the poor.*

* The idea of "riding on the heavens," furnished by our translation, is here followed, because לרכב בשמי־ם in the 33d verse, seems to be exactly parallel. But bishop Lowth, Mr. Merrick and Dr. Chandler render כלו לרכב בערבות, "Prepare the way for him who rideth through the deserts," i. e. who rode upon the cherubim, through the wilderness; alluding to the passage of the ark. This construction seems most agreeable to the common usage of the words employed in the original. Either way, the idea is truly great and sublime.

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In the former verse, the Psalmist tells us, that God hath confirmed, refreshed, and revived, his inheritance, by the plentiful, and as it were voluntary, showers of bread and flesh, that he rained down upon them. In these words, Dr. Chandler apprehends, he speaks of the manner, as well as abundance of the food thus given them; and renders the verse thus—"היכך, Thy food, or, As to thy food," the food which thou gavest them, "ישבו בה They dwelt in the midst of it; thou didst prepare, O God, by thy goodness, for the poor." Thus the history informs us, that the manna covered by the dew "lay round about the host;" and that the quails were "let fall by the camp, about a day's journey on one side, and a day's journey on the other round about the camp:" Exod. xvi 13. Numb. xi. 31. This was literally "dwelling in the midst of the food God had provided them." By the ministration of the word and sacraments, in the Christian Church, the true manna, the bread which cometh down, with the dew of God's blessing, from heaven, is continually furnished, for the nourishment of those who "hunger and thirst after righteousness." It "falls round about the camp," and, "as to this thy food, O God," we, thy favored people, have the happiness to "dwell in the midst of it:" thus "thou hast prepared, of thy goodness, for the poor in spirit."

11. *The* LORD *gave the word; great* was *the company of those that published* it.

He who supplied his people with food in the wilderness, enabled them likewise to vanquish the numerous enemies that opposed them in their passage through it, the Amalekites, the Amorites, the Midianites, the Moabites, &c. With respect to all these enemies, "the Lord gave the word." The Israelites engaged them, by his order. See Numb. xxi. 34. xxv. 17, and, under his conduct and blessing, obtained the victory over them. When the enemies of man's salvation were vanquished by the resurrection of Christ, and the heathen nations were to own his power, again "the Lord gave the word." It was published, at first, by apostles, confessors, and martyrs, and hath been since published continually, by all the churches, who celebrate in their services the victories of their Redeemer; as in old time, prophets and prophetesses, Moses, Aaron, Miriam, Deborah, and others, with the armies of Israel, sang triumphal songs, on occasion of temporal, but figurative conquests.

12. * *Kings with their armies did flee apace:* Heb. *fled away, fled away: and she that tarried at home divided the spoil.*

When God, by the hand of Moses and his successor Joshua, led his people, through the wilderness, into the land of promise, the kings of Canaan, with their mighty hosts, were discomfited; and the women of Israel, who "tarried at home, divided the spoil" of their vanquished enemies. After the conquest of the Midianites, as Dr. Chandler observes, God ordered the prey to be divided between them who went out on that expedition, and the rest of the congregation who continued in their tents: Numb. xxxi. 27. Thus, in the spiritual war, apostles, confessors, and martyrs, went out to the battle, fought and conquered; while the benefits of the victory extended to thousands and millions, who, without being exposed to their conflicts and torments, have enjoyed the fruit of their labors.

13. *Though ye have lien among the pots,* yet shall ye be as *the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.*

By "lying among the pots,*" or in "dust and ashes," is evidently denoted a state of affliction and wretchedness, like that of Israel in Egypt, which was exchanged for one of the utmost dignity and splendor, in Canaan; one as different from the former, as a caldron, discolored by smoke and soot, is from the bright and beautiful plumage of an eastern dove, glistering interchangeably, as with silver and gold. Thus the church of Christ emerged from a state of persecution and tribulation, into one of splendor and magnificence. And such is the change made in the spiritual condition of any man, when he passes from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God; he is invested with the robe of righteousness, and adorned with the grace of the Spirit of holiness.

14. *When the Almighty scattered kings in it, it was* white *as snow in Salmon.*

The purport of this difficult verse seems to be, that all was white as snow, *i. e.*, all was brightness, joy, and festivity, about Mount Salmon, תשלג בצלמון when the Almighty, fighting for his people Israel, vanquished their enemies, בה, in or about that part of the country.

15. *The hill of God* is as *the hill of Bashan; an high hill,* as *the hill of Bashan.*

* Bishop Lowth thinks with Dr. Hammond, that this verse was the Song, sung by by the choir, mentioned in the verse preceding. Dr. Chandler adds the next verse to it.

* My worthy and learned friend, Mr. Parkhurst, in his Hebrew Lexicon, gives the following account of the word שפתים (derived from שפת, to put or set any thing in order)—rows of stones "on which the caldrons or pots were placed. Lying among these denotes the most abject slavery; for this was the place of rest allotted to the vilest slaves." So our translators render it, in the margin of Ezek. xl. 53. Dr. Chandler adopts the same interpretation of the word.

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When the ark came in view of Mount Sion, the place of its fixed residence for the future, and probably when they began to ascend it, Dr. Chandler apprehends, this and the two following verses were sung. And if these words be read with an interrogation, he conceives they will appear suitable to the occasion, and worthy of the genuine spirit of poetry. "The hill of God," that hill which God hath chosen to inhabit, "is it the hill of Bashan, the hill with its craggy eminences, the hill of Bashan?" Bashan may boast of its proud eminences, its high summits; but is that the hill where God will fix his residence? The prophet speaks of Bashan with contempt and disdain, in comparison of Sion. And this agrees well with what immediately follows—

16. *Why leap ye*, or, *why look ye, askance with envy, ye high hills?* This is *the hill* which *God desireth to dwell in; yea, the* LORD *will abide* in it *forever.*

The Psalmist, in commemorating God's former mercies and loving kindnesses, having been led to mention the towering hills of Salmon and Bashan, by a masterly transition, suddenly resumes his original subject, with a beautiful apostrophe to those mountains, letting them know, that however proudly they might lift up their heads above the rest, or, in the language of poetry, "look askance with envy," on Mount Sion, yet this was the mount which Jehovah had determined to honor with his special presence; thither he was now ascending, with the ark of his strength; and there, between the cherubims, in the place prepared for him, he would "dwell forever;" till the whole dispensation would be at an end, till the glory of the Lord should be revealed in human nature; till God should be manifest in the flesh; and, the true tabernacle and temple should succeed the typical. After that, the priviliges of Sion were transferred to the Christian church; she became, and, while the world lasts, will continue to be, the "hill in which God delighteth to dwell:" she will therefore be justly entitled to the pre-eminence over all that may seem to be great and glorious in the world.

17. *The chariots of God* are *twenty thousand*, even *thousands of angels*, or, *thousands repeated: the* LORD is *among them* as in *Sinai, in the holy* place, or, *Sinai is in the sanctuary.*

The Psalmist in the preceding verse, had declared Sion to be the habitation of Jehovah. In this verse is described the majesty and magnificence of his appearance there, as a mighty conquerer of the enemies of his people, riding upon the cherubim, as in a triumphal chariot, with all the hosts of heaven, as it were in his reitnue. Thus God descended on Sinai, with the fire, the cloud, and the glory; thus he manifested himself, when taking possession of "the holy place" prepared for him in Sion; 2 Chron. v. 13.; and in some such manner, we may suppose king Messiah to have entered heaven at his ascension, when he went up in the clouds, with power and great glory, and all the attendant spirits joined his train, rejoicing to minister to their Lord, and increase the pomp and splendor of that glorious day.

18. *Thou hast ascended on high; thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men; yea*, for *the rebellious also, that the* LORD *God might dwell* among them.

When the ark had ascended Mount Sion, and was deposited in the place assigned for it, the singers are supposed, by Dr. Chandler, to have proceeded with this part of the Psalm, in which they celebrate the ascension of their God and King, by the symbol of his presence, to the heights of Sion, after having subdued their enemies, and enriched his people with the spoils of the vanquished, and the gifts of the tributary nations; of which much was probably employed in the service the tabernacle, and afterwards in building the temple, first designed by David, "that the Lord God might dwell," and have a fixed permanent habitation, among his people. But this whole transaction, like many others of old, being a figurative one, the apostle, Ephes. iv. 8. has applied the words before us to our blessed Saviour (the true ARK, on which the GLORY rested,) who personally ascended up to the highest heavens, "led captivity captive," by triumphing over his conquered enemies, and having received gifts from his heavenly Father, as the fruits of his victory, gave them unto men, as was most conducive to the establishment of his church, "that the Lord God might dwell among them. Thou hast ascended on high;" Thou, O Christ, who didst descend, from the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, to the lower parts of the earth, art again ascended, from the lower parts of the earth to the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, "thou hast led captivity captive;" thou hast conquered the conqueror, bound the strong one, redeemed human nature from the grave, and triumphantly carried it, with thee, to the throne of God; "thou hast received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also;" and, being thus ascended into thy glory, thou hast received of the Father the promise of the Spirit, with all his gifts and graces, to bestow, upon the sons of men;* even upon such

* The Psalmist mentions these gifts as received;

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as heretofore have not only broken thy laws, but appeared in arms against thee; yet of such as these, converted by the power of thy Gospel, wilt thou form and establish a church; "that the LORD God may dwell among them;" that so, of thy faithful people, gathered from all parts of the world, may be built up a living temple, "an habitation of God through the Spirit."

19. *Blessed* be *the* LORD, who *daily loadeth us* with benefits: Heb. *carries*, or, *supports us;* even *the God of our salvation.* 20. He that is *our God*, is *the God of salvation: and unto Godthe Lord* belong *the issues from death*, Heb. *the goings forth to death*, or, *of death.*

The preceding survey of God's dispensations constraineth the church to break out into an act of praise, and to bless the preserver of men, the author of eternal "salvation;" in whose hands are the "goings forth of death;" in other words, who has "the keys of death and the grave;" Rev. i. 18. who is possessed of power to confine, and to release; to kill and to make alive.

21. *But God shall wound the head of his enemies:* and *the hairy scalp*, or, *crown, of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses.*

The meaning is—God shall strike deep, or exhaust the blood of the head of his enemies, even the hairy crown of him that goes on in his guilty practices; where the emphasis consists in the description of God's enemies, who were such as persevered in their criminal actions. This verse begins a prediction of that vengeance, which the person, who was "ascended on high," would infallibly execute upon his impenitent enemies, and which was shadowed forth in the destruction of the enemies of Israel, by David, after that the ark of God was placed upon the hill of Sion. See 2 Sam. viii. The expressions, "the head," and "the hairy crown," denote the principal part, the strength, the pride, and the glory of the adversary, which was to be crushed, according to the original sentence; "He shall bruise thy HEAD." Gen. iii. 15.

22. *The* LORD *said, I will bring again from Bashan: I will bring* my people *again from the depths of the sea:* 23. *That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of* thine *enemies:* and *the tongue of thy dogs in the same.*

Abner, in his conference with the elders of Israel, to bring them over to David's interest, tells them, "The Lord hath spoken of David, saying: By the hand of my servant David, I will save my people Israel, out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies:" 2 Sam. iii. 18. Thus Jehovah had promised to repeat in Israel, by David, his glorious acts; to work as signal victories and deliverances for his people, as he had formerly done in the field of Bashan, and at the Red Sea; when they saw their enemies dead at their feet. By the glorious resurrection, and triumphant ascension of King Messiah, by the conquests of the Gospel, and the unparalleled overthrow of its opposers, were these figures realized, and these shadows changed into substances.

24. *They have seen thy goings*, or, *marches in procession, O God;* even *the goings*, or, *marches, of my God, my King, in*, or, *into the sanctuary.*

When the ark was safely deposited, the sacrifices were offered, the solemnity well-nigh concluded, and the whole assembly about to return back, Dr. Chandler supposes the singers to have struck up, and joined in the remaining part of this noble anthem. These words contain a sort of triumph, because this great work of translating the ark was now so happily accomplished. The people of Israel had a pledge and earnest of those mighty things which God would do for them, by the joyful and victorious manner in which, with the ark of his presence, he had taken possession of the place prepared for him on Mount Sion, and gone "into the sanctuary." A like pledge and earnest of her future enlargement and exaltation, was the ascension of her Lord and Head to the Christian church.

25. *The singers went before, the players on instruments* followed *after; amongst* them were *the damsels playing with timbrels.*

The joy and gladness expressed by David, and the house of Israel, when in solemn procession, with the sound of vocal and instrumental music, they "brought up the ark of Jehovah, and set it in its place," 2 Sam. vi. 5, 15, 17, may be considered as a prelude to that voice of universal exultation, with which the Christian church, in her holy services, doth now celebrate the resurrection and ascension of her Redeemer.

26. *Bless ye God in the congregations*, even *the* LORD, *from the fountain of Israel.*

"Bless ye God in the congregations;" in this form of words the Israelites are supposed, when accompanying the ark, to have reciprocally exhorted and encouraged each other to exert their utmost powers in the sacred employment of blessing and thanking God: "even the Lord from the fountain of Israel:"

"Thou hast received gifts for men;" the apostle, in his citation, showeth us the end for which they were received: "He gave gifts unto men." Or rather, as the best critics have observed, in the Hebrew idiom, to "take gifts for another," is the same as to "give them to another." Thus we read, 1 Kings, iii. 24. "Take me a sword;" i. e. give, or bring it me. Gen. xviii. 5. "I will take a bit of bread;" *i. e.* for you, or to give it you—"and comfort ye your hearts."

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the "fountain of Israel" is the same with the "stock, or family of Israel." See Isa. xlviii. 1. The sense of this latter clause therefore is, "Bless the Lord, ye who are sprung from the stock of Israel;" thus is the duty of blessing and thanksgiving enforced on the congregations of the faithful, in all ages.

27. *There is little Benjamin with their ruler, the princes of Judah, and their counsel, the princes of Zebulun, and the princes of Naphtali.*

The literal rendering of this verse is—"There is little Benjamin their ruler, the princes of Judah their counsel, the princes of Zebulun, and the princes of Naphtali." In this enumeration of the tribes of Israel, that were present at the removal of the ark, four only are mentioned; Benjamin and Judah, who dwelt nearest to the city of David; Zebulun and Naphtali, who were the farthest distant from it; to show, as Dr. Chandler observes, the unanimity of the whole nation, and of all the tribes far and near, in attending this solemnity, to testify their willing acknowledgment of David for their king, and the city of David for their capital, where all the great solemnities of religion should be performed, and their annual festivals continually celebrated. Benjamin, though the youngest tribe, is named first, and called the "ruler;" because from that tribe sprang Saul, the first king of Israel. The attendance of this tribe showed, that all envy and opposition to David from Saul's party was at an end. Upon David's accession to the crown, Judah became the royal tribe, and supported the throne by its counsels. Zebulun and Naphtali were tribes of eminent learning and knowledge. See Gen. xlix. 21, Judg. v. 14. Thus, after the publication of the Gospel, the nations flocked into the church, both those that were near, and those that were afar off; power, wisdom, and learning, submitted themselves to the kingdom, and conspired to set forth the glory of Messiah.

28. *Thy God hath commanded thy strength: strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us.*

The former part of this verse contains a comfortable assurance given to the church, that God had made provision, and issued out orders, for her establishment and security. In the latter clause is a prayer, that he would accomplish all his counsels concerning her; and, as he had begun a good work, so that he would vouchsafe to perfect it unto the day of the Lord.

29. *Because of thy temple at Jerusalem, shall kings bring presents unto thee.*

David foretells, that on the establishment of the then church and worship in Jerusalem, the kings of the Gentiles should come, and make their oblations at the *temple of God; which happened in his days, and those of his son Solomon, as an earnest and figure of that plenary accession of the kings of the earth to the church of Christ, which was to take place in the latter days, under the Gospel. See 2 Sam. viii. 9—11. 1 Kings, v. 1. x. 1. 24. 2 Chron. ix. 23. Isa. lx. 3. 6. Matt. ii. 11. Rev. xxi. 24.

30. *Rebuke the company of spearmen, the multitude of the bulls, with the calves of the people, till every one submit himself with pieces of silver; scatter thou the people that delight in war.*

We have here a prophetical prayer against the enemies of the Israelitish church. The whole verse, when literally translated, runs thus—"Rebuke the wild beast of the reeds, the congregation of the mighty among the calves of the nations, skipping, or exulting, with pieces of silver; scatter the people that delight in war." By the "wild beast of the reeds," is to be understood the Egyptian power, described by its emblem, the crocodile, or river horse, creatures living among the "reeds" of the Nile. The "calves of the nations" intend the objects of worship among the Egyptians, their Apis, Osiris, &c. around which the "congregations of the mighty" assembled. And by their "skipping with," or, "exulting in, pieces of silver" may either be meant their dancing at their idolatrous festivals with the tinkling instruments called "Sistra," which might be made of "silver," or else it may imply their "glorying in pieces of silver," or, "in their riches." The last member of the verse is plain, "Scatter the people that delight in war." The whole is evidently a prayer of the prophet to this effect, that it would please God to bring down and overthow the strength, the pride, and the idolatry of Egypt, that ancient adversary and oppressor of Israel†.—The Christian

*The Tabernacle is called היכל, 1 Sam. iii. 3. This might, otherwise, seem inconsistent with the supposed occasion of the Psalm, and the times of David, when there was yet no temple there. Bishop LOWTH.

†Increpa regem Egypti populo tuo invidentem, increpa etiam optimates qui inter populos honore et viribus eminent, argenteis clavis, vel aliis insignibus ornati. BOSSUET. See Bishop Lowth, Prælect. vi. ad. fin. edit. 8vo. The sense of the verse cannot be better expressed than it is by Mr. Merrick in his version:

The beast, that from his reedy bed.
On Nile's proud banks, uplifts the head,
Rebuke, indignant; nor the throng
Forget, from whose misguided tongue
The heifer and the grazing steer
The offer'd vow, unconscious, hear;
While to the silver's tinkling sound,
Their feet in solemn dance rebound.

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church, in like manner, through faith in the power of her Lord, risen from the dead and ascended into heaven, prayeth for the confusion of her implacable enemies, who delight in opposing the kingdom of Messiah.

31. *Princes*, or, *ambassadors, shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.*

The hostile powers being overthrown, and the church of Israel fully established, the nations around her, even those which had been most given to idolatry, sued for her friendship and came to Jerusalem, with their gifts and oblations; as, in like manner, after the defeat of Maxentius and Maximin, the Roman empire, with all its tributary provinces, was added to the church of Christ.

32. *Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth: O sing praises unto the* LORD.

"Rapt into future times," the prophet exhorteth, not Judea only, but all "the kingdoms of the earth," to unite in chanting forth the praises of their God and Saviour. In the fulness of time, this exhortation was heard and obeyed. For Eusebius thus describes the state of the church in the days of Constantine: "There was one and the same power of the Holy Spirit, which passed through all the members; one soul in all; the same alacrity of faith; one common consent in chanting forth the praises of God." Euseb. Eccles. Hist. b. x chap. 2. And it deserves notice, that the primitive Christians, when, delivered from the rage of persecuting tyrants, they freely celebrated their holy festivals, could find no words so well calculated to express the joy and gladness of their hearts, as the songs of Moses, and David, and the prophets, which seemed to have been divinely penned on purpose for their use, upon that glorious occasion. The reader may see several very curious and beautiful instances of this, in the opening of the xth book of Eusebius' History, and in the panegyric there recorded to have been spoken by him, in a full ecclesiastical assembly, to Paulinus, bishop of Tyre, upon the consecration of that church.

33. *To him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens*, which were *of old; lo, he doth send out his voice*, and that *a mighty voice.*

The praises of the church are sung to him who, after his sufferings here below, re-ascended to take possession of his ancient throne, high above all heavens; who from thence speaketh to the world by his glorious gospel, mighty and powerful, as thunder, in its effects upon the hearts of men. See Ps. xxix. throughout. The power of Christ's voice, when he was on earth, appeared by the effects which followed, when he said, "Young man, arise:" "Lazarus come forth:" "Peace, be still:" and it will yet farther appear, when "all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man, and come forth."

34. *Ascribe ye strength unto God; his excellency is over Israel, and his strength is in the clouds*, Heb. *the skies.*

God requires his people to ascribe unto him the kingdom, and the power, and the glory; to acknowledge him as the author of life, health and salvation, of all they are, and all they have, in nature and in grace; to glorify him as the Creator and Governor of the world, the Redeemer and Sanctifier of his church.

35. *O God*, thou art *terrible out of thy holy places; the God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto* his *people. Blessed* be *God.*

The Psalmist, here exemplifying the precept laid down in the foregoing verse, ascribes to God the glory of his appearance in the sanctuary, as the God and King of Israel, terrifying and dismaying his enemies, comforting and invigorating his people. Such is the presence of a glorified Saviour, by his Spirit, in the Christian church. For this, and all other his mercies, she is bound continually to say, and, by her holy services, continually doth she say, BLESSED BE GOD.

THIRTEENTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM LXIX.

ARGUMENT.

THE application of many passages in this Psalm to our Lord, made by himself and his apostles, as well as the appointment of the whole, by the church, to be used on Good Friday, direct us to consider it as uttered by the Son of God, in the day of his passion. 1—5, he describeth his sufferings, undergone for the sins of men; 6, 7, prayeth that his disciples may not be offended at the pain and shame of the cross;* 8—12, relateth the usage he met with at the hands of the Jews; 13—19, maketh his prayer to the Father; 20, 21, complaineth of his desolate estate, of the reproach cast upon him,

* In confesso est apud Christianos, in Psalmo lxix nobis ob oculos poni Christum, eumque passum. Nos addimus, eumque crucifixum; quia evangelistæ Matthæus, Marcus, et Johannes, comma vigesimum secundum certæ circumstantiæ crucifixionis Christi applicârunt—Notatum igitur volumus, Christum in tota sua ad Patrem supplicatione (est enim ejusdem argumenti cum Ps. xxii.,) describere mortis et calamitatis suæ genus, ut maxime pudendum, et ignominiosum. Item, ad ver. 8, 20, 21.—Christus nullas hic negligit voces, quæ probrum aut ignominiam status, in quo tunc erat, designare valent. VITRINGA Observ. Sacr. lib. ii. cap. 10.

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and of the gall and vinegar administered to him; 22—28, foretelleth the judgments of heaven, about to fall upon the Jewish nation; 29, returneth to the consideration of his own sorrows, and prayeth for deliverance; 30, 31, praiseth the Father for the accomplishment of that deliverance; 32, 33, exhorteth all men to come and partake of it, and, 34, the whole creation to join in a chorus of thanksgiving for it; 35, 36, predicteth the salvation, edification, and perpetuity of the church.

1. *Save me, O God, for the waters are come in unto* my *soul.* 2. *I sink in deep mire, where* there is *no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.*

The Gospels inform us concerning the constancy and patience of Christ under his sufferings; the sufferings themselves (those in particular of his soul,) are largely described in the Psalms; many of which, and this among the rest, seem to have been indited beforehand by the Spirit, for HIS use in the day of trouble. As the head of the church, he here beseecheth the Father to "save," through him, his mystical body. He compares the sad situation into which he was brought to that of a drowning man. The divine displeasure, like a stormy tempest, was let loose upon him; the sins of the world, as deep mire, enclosed and detained him; whilst all the waters of affliction went over his head, and penetrated to his vitals.

3. *I am weary of my crying, my throat is dried; mine eyes fail, while I wait for my God.*

This verse describes the effects of those supplications which the Son of God offered up, "with strong crying and tears, in the days of his flesh;" Heb. v. 7; of that thirst, which, through loss of blood on the cross, "dried his throat;" and of that long and patient endurance, when his "eyes failed," and were closed in darkness, while his faith "waited" for the deliverance promised by the Father. The hour is coming, when our eyes must fail, and be closed; but even then "let us wait for our God:" in this respect, "let us die the death of that righteous" person, who died for us; "and let our last end be like his."

4. *They that hate me without a cause, are more than the hairs of my head: they that would destroy me,* being *mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty: then I restored* that *which I took not away.*

The Jews, the Romans, and the spirits of darkness, made up that multitude of enemies, which, like an herd of evening wolves, surrounded the Lamb of God, thirsting after his blood, nor resting till they had drawn forth the very last drop of it from his heart. And thus the only innocent person in the world suffered for all its guilt, making satisfaction for wrongs which he never did, and "restoring that which he took not away."*

5. *O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee.*

These words, in the mouth of David, or any other sinful son of Adam, are plain enough. They may, nevertheless, be spoken, as the rest of the Psalm is, in the person of Christ, concerning the iniquities committed by us, but "laid on him;" which he therefore mentions, as if they had been his own; the head complaining of diseases incident only to the members.†

6. *Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed for my sake; let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel.* 7. *Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face.*

The Son of God prefers a petition to the Father, that his disciples may not be scandalized on account of his passion, or be tempted to relinquish their trust in God, at beholding his only and beloved Son forsaken on the cross; since it was not for any demerit of his own, but for the sake of God's glory, as well as man's salvation, that he "bore reproach, and shame covered his face." It ought to be the prayer of every Christian, especially if he be a minister of the Gospel, that his sufferings in the world may not give just offence to the brethren, or the church; which they never will do, if he suffers in a good cause, with a good conscience.

8. *I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children.* 9. *For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.*

The Jews were Christ's "brethren" according to the flesh. To them he was a "stranger and an alien." "He came to his own, and his own received him not." "We know," said they, "that God spake unto Moses; but as for this fellow, we know not

* "Quæ non rapui"—Ex personâ Christi: ita mecum agitur, ac si rapta ab altero, ab altero, eoque innoxio, repetas; neque enim impiorum exemplo, Deo rapui honorem debitum; pro eis solvo quicunque rapuerunt; sicut scriptum est: "Propter scelus populi mei, percussi eum." Isa. liii. 8. BOSSUET.

† So this verse is interpreted by the fathers, and many of the commentators cited by Poole, in his Synopsis—Thus also Bossuet—"Insipientiam meam et, delicta mea"—Quæ in me suscepi. "Quia posuit in eo Dominus iniquitates omnium nostrûm." Isa. liii. 6.

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from whence he is." And again, "thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil.' John, i. 11. ix. 29. viii. 48. The ground of all this enmity was the "zeal" of Christ for the reformation and purification of the church, which he manifested in his reproofs and exhortations, as also by the emblematical act of driving the buyers and sellers out of the temple. Upon this latter occasion, the evangelist tells us, "his disciples remembered that it was written," that is, it was predicted of Messiah in this Psalm, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up:" John ii. 17. Therefore, as he adds immediately, "the reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me." In calumniating and blaspheming the works of the Son of God, the Jews reproached both the Father who gave him those works to do, and the Spirit by which he did them: all which reproaches fell on the man Christ, as the visible instrument employed in the doing of them. This last passage is thus quoted and applied by St. Paul—"Even Christ pleased not himself: but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me:" Rom. xv. 3. The usage our Lord met with from his brethren, because of his zeal for the house of God, should comfort those who meet with the same usage, on the same account.

10. *When I wept* and chastened *my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach.* 11. *I made sackcloth also my garment; and I became a proverb to them.* 12. *They that sit in the gate speak against me: and I* was *the song of the drunkards.*

To expiate the sins of his creatures, the King of glory became a man of sorrows; he put on mortal flesh, as a penitential garment; he fasted and prayed, and mourned, and wept, and humbled himself to the dust, as if he had been the offender, and we the righteous persons that needed no repentance. And what return was made him? "It was to his reproach, and he became a proverb to them," for whom he suffered. "They that sat in the gate," or, on the "judgment-seat," which used to be in the gates of cities, even the senators and judges of the land, the chief priests and elders, "spake against him," with cool and deliberate malice; while he was "the song of the drunken" and profligate, who more grossly insulted and derided him. The true followers of the holy Jesus will often experience the like treatment, from an evil and adulterous generation.

13. *But as for me, my prayer* is *unto thee,* O LORD, *in an acceptable time: O God, in the multitude of thy mercies hear me, in the truth of thy salvation.*

The Son of God himself, in the midst of sorrows and sufferings, has recourse to prayer, pleading for his church the "mercies" of the Father, set forth in the promises, and his "truth," engaged to make those promises good, in the "salvation" of his chosen, through their head and representative. The "acceptable time," in which Christ prayed, was the time when he offered the great propitiatory sacrifice. Through the merit of that sacrifice it is, that we have an "acceptable time, and a day of salvation," allowed us. Behold, NOW is that time, behold NOW is that day! Let us not delay one moment to use and improve it aright.

14. *Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink; let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters* 15. *Let not the water-flood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.*

Messiah petitions for deliverance from calamities, under the same images which were employed at the beginning of the Psalm, to describe those calamities. The purport of the petition is, that the sins of the world, and the sufferings due to them, may not finally overwhelm him, nor the grave "shut her mouth upon him" for ever; but that the morning of his resurrection may at length succeed the night of his passion. Such is also the hope and the prayer of the church, and of the Christian, here below.

16. *Hear me,* O LORD, *for thy loving kindness* is *good: turn unto me, according to the multitude of thy tender mercies.* 17. *And hide not thy face from thy servant, for I am in trouble; hear me speedily.* 18. *Draw nigh unto my soul,* and *redeem it; deliver me because of mine enemies.* 19. *Thou hast known my reproach, my shame, and my dishonor: mine enemies* are *all before thee.*

As afflictions increase, the prayers are redoubled. Christ pleads with the Father for redemption from death, on account of his divine "loving kindness and mercy;" of his own great "trouble;" of his "enemies," that they might be either converted or confounded; of the "reproach, shame, and dishonor" undergone by him, that they might be wiped off, and done away; of the wrong he suffered from his adversaries, whose iniquitous proceedings were "all before God," and known unto him. Deliverance from tribulation and persecution, is prayed for by the church, and by her faithful children, upon the same grounds.

20. *Reproach hath broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness: and I looked* for some *to take pity, but* there was *none; and for comforters, but I found none.* 21. *They*

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gave me also gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

The argument urged by Christ, in these most affecting words, is, that in the extremity of his passion, he was left alone, without a comforter, a friend, or attendant; while all that were round about him studied to infuse every bitter and acrimonious ingredient into his cup of sorrows. This was literally as well as metaphorically true, when "they gave him to drink vinegar mingled with gall." See Matt. xxvii. 34. John, xix. 28. Such are the comforts often administered, by the world, to an afflicted and deserted soul.

22. *Their table* shall become a snare before them; and* that which should have been *for* their *welfare*, Heb. *their peace offerings*, shall become *a trap.*

At this verse beginneth a prediction of those dreadful judgments which heaven has since inflicted upon the crucifiers of the Lord of Glory. By their "table becoming a snare, and their peace offerings a "trap," is pointed out the consequences of the Jews adhering to the legal services, in opposition to him who is "the end of the law, for righteousness." After his suffering and exaltation, to continue under the law, became not only unprofitable, but destructive, inasmuch as it implied a denial of Messiah's advent, and a renunciation of every evangelical benefit and blessing. The religion of God's own appointment was an abomination to him, when reduced to the form of godliness, deserted by its power. Christians, who pride themselves in the one, while they deny and deride the other, would do well te consider this.

23. *Thou wilt darken their eyes that they shall not see; and make their loins continually to shake.*

They who loved darkness rather than light by the righteous judgment of God, were permitted to walk on in darkness, while the blind led the blind. And such still continues to be the state of the Jews, notwithstanding that intolerable weight of woe which made "their loins to shake," and bowed down their backs to the earth. "The veil remaineth yet upon their hearts," in the reading the Old Testament; nor can they see therein "the things which belong unto their peace." These last two verses are cited, as spoken of Israel, by St. Paul, Rom. xi. 9, 10. Afflict us, blessed Lord, if thou seest it good for us to be afflicted only take not from us, in our affliction, the "light" of thy truth, and the "strength" of thy grace.

24. *Thou wilt pour out thine indignation upon them, and thy wrathful anger will take hold of them.*

Never was "indignation so poured out," never did "wrath so take hold" on any nation, as on that, which once was, beyond every other, beloved and favored. "The wrath," says St. Paul, 1 Thess. ii. 16, "is come upon them to the uttermost, εἰς τέλος, to the end," to the very last dregs of the cup of fury. Let every church which boasteth of favors bestowed, and privileges conferred upon her, remember the consequences of their being abused by Jerusalem; and let every individual do the same.

25. *Their habitation shall be desolate*, and *none shall dwell in their tents.*

Our Lord seems to have had this passage in his view, when he said to the Jews, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate:" Matt. xxiii. 38. Jerusalem was by the Roman armies destroyed from the foundations. It hath been since indeed rebuilt, and inhabited by Gentiles, by Christains, and by Saracens, but no more by the Jewish people. It is remarkable, that this verse is applied, Acts, i. 20, to Judas, considered as the head and representative of that apostate nation, which rejected and delivered up its Prince and Saviour to be crucified. "He was guide to them that took Jesus:" Acts, i. 16. The punishment therefore, as well as the sin of Israel, is portrayed in his person, and the same prophecy is applicable to him and to his countrymen.*

26. *For they persecute* him *whom thou hast smitten, and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded.*†

The cause of the foregoing calamities, inflicted on the Jews, is here assigned,

* I have taken the liberty to give a future rendering to the verbs in this and the following verses. That they are to be so understood, saith Dr. Hammond, i. e. in the future sense, by way of prediction, and not as an imprecation, see St. Aug. de Civ. l, xvii. c 19. "Hæc non optando sunt dicta, sed optandi specie, pro phetando—These things are not said by the way of wishing, but under the show or scheme of wishing by prophecy." And indeed the Hebrew יְהִי is in the future, and is most fitly rendered, "shall be." Andso doth the Jewish Arab interpreter observe, that such seeming imprecations as here and elsewhere occur in this book of Psalms are not so much by way of imprecation, as by way of prophecy, or prediction of what in God's best judgments would certainly befall man. HAM in loc.

* "Fiat habitatio eorum deserta"—De Juda proditore exponitur, Act. i. 20. Congruit etiam Judæis, eversa Hierosolyma, quod Christus predixerat: "Ecce relinquetur vobis domus vestra deserta." Luc. xiii. 35. BOSSUET.

† Datur his in verbis ratio longe maxima et gravissima, propter quam Judæi terra sua essent ejiciendi, ac nomine et prerogativis populi Dei privandi, quia nimirum "eum persequuntur, quem a Deo percussum" vident, hoc est, quem vident ira Divina maximopere pressum, et ad summa *adquevisse* redactum. VITRINGA, Observat. Sacr. lib. ii. cap. 9.

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namely, that, instead of mourning and sympathizing with Messiah, in the day when Jehovah laid on him the iniquities of us all, and afflicted him for our sakes, they, by reproaches and blasphemies, aggravated his sufferings to the uttermost; and afterwards continued to use his disciples in the same manner. It were to be wished that the sorrows of the penitent, when wounded with a sense of sin, never subject him to the scorn and contempt of those who would be thought Christians.

27. *Thou wilt add iniquity to their iniquity; and they shall not come into thy righteousness.*

As they added affliction to the afflictions of Christ, so God permitted* them to go on, blinded and deserted, in their wickedness, "adding sin to sin," filling up the measure of their fathers, still obstinately refusing to come into the church, and partake of the "righteousness" which is by faith. From all thy judgments, good Lord, deliver us; but, above all, from that which punishes one sin with another, and seals up the reprobate to destruction.

28. *They shall be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.*

By "the book of the living," in which the names of the "righteous are written," is to be understood the register of the true servants and worshippers of God, of those who are "justified," or made "righteous," through faith. In this register, the names of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the ancient fathers of the Israelitish race, with their true children, stand recorded; but the degenerate and apostate Jews have been long since "blotted out;" they are no longer the peculium of heaven; nor have they any part or portion in the inheritance of the sons of God. Thus Ezekiel: "They shall not be in the assembly of my people, nor shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel:" xiii. 9. And our Lord, in his conversations with the Jews, took every opportunity to tell them, that they, for their unbelief, should be "cast out," and that the Gentiles, obeying the call of the Gospel, should come from all quarters of the world, and "sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God."

29. *But I* am *poor and sorrowful: let thy saving health, O God,* or, *thy salvation shall,* or, *can, set me up on high.*

Messiah returns to the subject of his own sufferings, which were not a little enhanced by the consideration, that so many of his people would not be the better for them. "I am poor and sorrowful;" "poor," for he was divested of his very garments; "sorrowful," for he was covered over with stripes and wounds. But he knew the hour was coming when the salvation of God would raise him from the dead, and "set him up on high." Thus should a disciple of Jesus depart out of the world, joyfully relinquishing its goods, patiently bearing its evils, and confidently expecting a resurrection to glory.

30. *I will praise the name of God with a song, and magnify him with thanksgiving.*

Here, as in the xxiid, and many other Psalms, the scene changes from sorrow to joy; from a state of suffering to one of triumph; from the passion to the resurrection. Jesus, risen from the dead, declares his resolution of praising and magnifying the Father, for the salvation of the world, happily accomplishd by his labors and sufferings, which were now for ever at an end. The church does the same incessantly, on earth and in heaven.

31. This *also shall please the* LORD, *better than an ox* or *bullock that hath horns and hoofs.*

A bullock was in its prime for sacrifice, under the law, when it began to put forth its "horns and hoofs." The infinite distance, therefore, in point of value, between the best legal sacrifices, and those of obedience, love, and praise, as offered by Christ, and through him by his church, under the Gospel, is pointed out in this verse. See Psal. xl. 6, &c. l. 23.

32. *The humble shall see* this, and *be glad: and your heart shall live that seek God;* or, *Be seeking God, and your heart shall live.*

It is foretold, that the "humble," or the "poor in spirit," i. e. the meek and lowly followers of the holy Jesus, should find everlasting joy and comfort in the glad tidings of salvation; all mankind are exhorted to "seek after God," as manifested in the Gospel of his Son; and the reward promised is "life" spiritual and eternal.*

33. *For the* LORD *heareth the poor, and despiseth not his prisoners.*

An argument for our "seeking after God," is the experience of patriarchs, prophets, and saints, who in all ages have sought, and found him, by repentance and faith: and that the LORD "despiseth not his prisoners," is evident from what he did and suffered, to deliver their souls from the bondage of sin, their bodies from the prison of the grave, and both from the dungeon of hell. Therefore,

34. *Let the heaven and earth praise him, the seas and every thing that moveth therein.*

The mercies of God in Christ are such, that

* Deserendo, et permittendo, non operando; ut Theologi norunt. BOSSUET.

* Hæc et sequentia ad redemptionem per Christum, sub figura solutæ captivitatis, videntur pertinere. BOSSUET.

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they cannot worthily be praised by anything less than an universal chorus of the whole old and new creation; and what should such a chorus celebrate, but those mercies by which all things have been made, preserved, and redeemed?

35. *For God will save Sion, and build the cities of Judah, that they*, i. e. men, *may dwell there, and have it in possession.*

The salvation and edification of the church followed the passion and resurrection of Christ. "God will save Sion," that is, the church, which at first consisted of the apostles, who were Jews, and others of that nation by them converted to the faith. "And build the cities of Judah," or cause churches to arise in all the world, which shall from thenceforth take the names, and inherit the privileges, of "Israel and Judah; that men," even such as God shall call from among the nations, "may dwell there," as citizens of the new Jerusalem, "and," instead of the rejected Jews, "have it in their possession."

36. *The seed also of his servants shall inherit it, and they that love his name shall dwell therein.*

The continuation of the church in the posterity of the faithful, is here predicted. Accordingly, the descendants of the proselyted Gentiles have been in possession of the Gospel privileges, for above 1700 years. And thus it will be, while they abide in the faith, and "love the name" of Jesus. Should the Gentiles apostatize as the Jews did, and the Jews be converted as the Gentiles were, then the Gospel would go from the Gentiles to the Jews, as before it went from the Jews to the Gentiles; then would there "come out of Sion the Deliverer, to turn away ungodliness from Jacob." Rom. xi. 26.

PSALM LXX.

THE words of this Psalm occur, without any material variations, in Ps. xl. verse 13, to the end. The reader is therefore referred thither for the exposition; as before, in the case of the liiid and xivth Psalms.

FOURTEENTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM LXXI.

ARGUMENT.

THE Psalmist, sorely distressed in his old age (see ver. 9, and 18.,) by the rebellion of Absalom, which was his great affliction at that period of life, ver. 1, prayeth for the divine assistance, pleading, 2, God's righteousness, 3, and promise; 4, the iniquity of his persecutors; 5, 6, the mercies vouchsafed him from his birth; 7, 8, his being deserted and given up by man; 9, his old age; 10, 11, the taunts and insults of his adversaries: 12, he repeateth his request; 13, prophesieth the downfall of his enemies; declareth, 14, his hope, 15, his gratitude, 16, his faith; 17, 18, wisheth to be preserved, that he might show forth the power and glory of God, whose righteousness and marvellous acts, 19, he extolleth, and thence, 20, 21, promiseth himself a final redemption from all his troubles, and a restoration to honor and comfort; when, 22—24, he shall sing and speak the praises of the Lord.

1. *In thee, O* LORD, *do I put my trust; let me never be put to confusion.*

The promises of salvation are made to those who, renouncing all confidence in the world and themselves, "trust" in God alone for it. For this reason the Psalmist so often begins his prayer with a declaration of his "faith," which is to the soul in affliction, what an anchor is to a ship in distress.

2. *Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape: incline thy ear unto me, and save me.*

A second argument, here used, is the "righteousness" of God, who cannot but be faithful and just to his own gracious word. By that word, he had engaged to establish the temporal throne of David, and the eternal throne of the Son of David. And, by the same word, he has engaged to bring those who believe in him, through sufferings, to glory.

3. *Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort: thou hast given commandment to save me, for thou* art *my rock and my fortress.*

The protection of the Almighty, to which the troubled soul "resorts" by faith and prayer, is compared to that which a well fortified castle, or town, affords to those within it, in time of war. And the plea, upon which this petition is enforced, is in a manner the same with the former, namely, the declared purpose of God to be the Saviour of his servants; "Thou hast given commandment to save me."

4. *Deliver me O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.*

The divine assistance is implored by the Psalmist, thirdly, on the foot of the goodness of his cause, and the iniquity of his enemies. Such were Absalom, Ahithophel, &c. to David; Judas and the Jews to Christ; and such are the world, the flesh, and the devil, to the Christian. Against them he is to

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pray and fight continually; ever remembering that wickedness is at least as dangerous when it tempts, as when it persecutes; and can smile, as well as frown, a man dead.

5. *For thou* art *my hope, O* LORD *God;* thou art *my trust from my youth.* 6. *By thee have I been holden up from the womb: thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels; my praise* shall be *continually of thee.*

Former mercies are urged, as a fifth motive for the divine goodness to continue those mercies. The watchful care of heaven over us, at an age when we are able to take no care of ourselves, deserves consideration. The love of Jesus, shown in passing through a state of childhood for us, deserves a still more deep and devout consideration.

7. *I am as a wonder unto many: but thou* art *my strong refuge.*

David, banished from his kingdom, was regarded as a "wonder," or a prodigy of wretchedness; Christ, in his state of humiliation upon earth, was a "sign," every where "spoken against," as Simeon foretold he would be: Luke, ii. 34. The Christian who lives by faith, who quits possession for reversion, and who chooses to suffer with his Saviour here, that he may reign with him hereafter, appears to the men of the world, as a monster of folly and enthusiasm. But God is the "strong refuge" of all such.

8. *Let my mouth be filled* with *thy praise,* and with *thy honor, all the day.*

Whatever men say, or think of him, the royal prophet desires still to strengthen, and to delight himself, in doing the will, singing the praises, and setting forth the glory of God. Such likewise was thy desire, O blessed Jesus! in the days of thy flesh. Ever grant that it may be ours.

9. *Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth.*

David, mindful of the noble actions which, through God's assistance, he had achieved in his youth, beseeches him not to desert his servant, when persecuted by a rebellious son, in his old age. The weaknesses and temptations peculiar to that time of life, render this a petition necessary for us all to make, before we are overtaken by it. The church findeth but too much occasion to make the same, now that she is sunk in years; when faith languisheth, charity waxeth cold, and the infirmities of a spiritual old age are coming fast upon her.

10. *For mine enemies speak against me; and they that lay wait for my soul, take counsel together,* 11, *Saying, God hath forsaken him, persecute and take him, for* there *is none to deliver* him.

They who saw David ascending Mount Olivet in tears, when Absalom had driven him from Jerusalem, and they who beheld Jesus led forth out of the same Jerusalem, to be crucified on Mount Calvary, were tempted to regard both the one and the other, as finally deserted by God. They who view the church, or any member thereof, under affliction and persecution, are too frequently tempted to think the same, and to act accordingly; though they are so plainly taught the contrary, by the restoration of the king of Israel, and the resurrection of the Son of God.

12. *O God, be not far from me: O my God, make haste to help.* 13. *Let them,* or, *they shall, be confounded* and *consumed that are against my soul; let them,* or, *they shall, be covered* with *reproach and dishonor that seek my hurt.*

As the insolence of his persecutors increaseth, the distressed monarch crieth more earnestly unto God; and is so far from relinquishing his hope, that, in the midst of his sorrows, he foreseeth and foretelleth the final confusion of his enemies. The Christian, who has faith in the promises, may do likewise, in the worst of times, and the worst of circumstances. For the day cometh, when all the workers of wickedness shall be destroyed, and "death and hell shall be cast into the lake of fire." Rev. xx. 14.

14. *But I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more.* 15. *My mouth shall show forth thy righteousness* and *thy salvation all the day long: for I know not the numbers* thereof.

As there is no end to the loving kindness of Jehovah, there should be none to our gratitude. The "hope" of a Christian "giveth songs in the night," and enableth him to be thankful, even in the dark season of affliction. Paul and Silas not only prayed, but also "sang praises to God, in a prison, at midnight." Acts, xvi. 25.

16. *I will go in the strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of thy righteousness,* even *of thine only.*

He who goeth to the battle against his spiritual enemies, should go, confiding, not in his own "strength," but in that of the Lord God; not in his own "righteousness," but in that of his Redeemer. Such an one engageth, with omnipotence on his side, and cannot but be victorious.

17. *O God, thou hast taught me from my youth; and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.* 18. *Now also when I am old and grey-headed, O God, forsake me not: until I have showed thy strength unto* this *generation,* and *thy power to every one* that *is to come.*

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It was the God of Israel, who "taught" David, as a warrior, to conquer, and, as a Psalmist, to "declare the wondrous works" of his great Benefactor. He requests to be preserved in his old age, until, by completing his victories, and his Psalms composed to celebrate them, he had "showed the strength and power of God," not only to the men of the "generation" in which he lived, but also to "every one that should come," or arise in after times, and chant those divine hymns in the assemblies of the faithful, throughout all ages. Doth St. Paul wish to have his life continued upon earth? It is only, that he may edify the church, and glorify God. Otherwise, it is far "better," says he, "to depart, and to be with Christ."

19. *Thy righteousness, O God, is very high, who hast done great things: O God, who is like unto thee!*

What a force is now added to these words, by the actual exaltation of the righteous Saviour "very high" above all heavens, and by the "great things" which he hath "done" for our souls! Let us think on these things, and we shall most affectionately say, with David, "O God, who is like unto thee!" Delightful is thy love, O Lord Jesu, beyond all pleasure, more precious than much fine gold, and honorable above the thrones of the mighty! The world languisheth and fadeth away at thy presence, whose beauty is immortal, whose treasures diminish not, and whose glory endureth through the unnumbered ages of eternity.

20. Thou *which hast showed me great and sore trouble, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth.* 21. *Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.*

In David, delivered out of his troubles, and restored to his throne, we behold our Lord, after his "great and sore trouble, literally quickened, or revived, brought up again from the depths of the earth, increased in greatness, and comforted on every side." In him we were virtually, by his grace we are actually, raised from sin and sorrow, to righteousness and comfort; and, through his power we shall be raised, from dust and corruption, to glory and immortality.

22. *I will also praise thee with the psaltery,* even *thy truth, O my God; unto thee will I sing with the harp, O thou Holy One of Israel.* 23. *My lips shall greatly rejoice, when I sing unto thee: and my soul, which thou hast redeemed.* 24. *My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long; for they are confounded, for they are brought unto shame, that seek my hurt.*

The truth of God, in accomplishing his promises, by the redemption of our souls, and the confusion of our spiritual enemies, is a subject which demands a never-ceasing tribute of gratitude and love, of praise and thanksgiving. To celebrate it aright, with the melody of instruments, voices, and affections, all in perfect concord, is the duty and delight of the church militant; which, when thus employed, affords the best resemblance of the church triumphant.

PSALM LXXII.

ARGUMENT.

DAVID, praying for Solomon, foretelleth his peaceful and glorious reign, and under that figure, in most lively and beautiful colors, portrayeth the kingdom of Messiah; 1—4, its righteous administration; 5, its duration; 6, 7, its blessings; 8, its extent; 9—11, the accession of the Gentiles to it; 12—14, the redemption to be wrought, and, 15, the prayers and praises to be offered up in it; 16, its miraculous increase and fruitfulness; 17, its perpetuity and universality: 18, 19, a doxology sung to God for it.

1. *Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son.** 2. *He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment.*

In this prophetical prayer, the aged monarch of Israel, about to resign the kingdom into the hands of his son Solomon, makes unto God the request of a wise father for him. He asks such a portion of wisdom and integrity from above, as might enable the young prince to govern aright the people of God, and to exhibit to the world a fair resemblance of that king of Israel, who was, in the fulness of time, to sit upon "the throne of his father David;" Luke, i. 32, "to reign in righteousness;" Isa. xxxii. 1, and "to have all judgment committed unto him." John, v. 22.

3. *The mountains shall bring,* or, *bear, peace to the people, and the little hills, in,* or, *by, righteousness.*

In other words, peace, manifested by its consequence, plenteousness, shall be upon all the mountains and little hills of Judea, by means of that righteous judgment which Solomon will execute in the land. And thus in the days of Messiah, "Beautiful upon the mountains were the feet of them that brought the glad tidings of peace;" which the fruits

* The "king," and the "king's son," are the same person; a character that belongs to none so properly as to Solomon, who was the first prince that was at the same time "king," and "son of a king." MUDGE. Dr. Chandler is of the same opinion.

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of the Spirit, in the churches, plainly showed to have been derived from above, through the righteousness of the Redeemer, producing "peace on earth."

4. *He shall judge the poor of the people: he shall save the children of the needy; and shall break in pieces the oppressor.*

It is the part of justice, in well-ordered governments, to see that the "poor and needy have right;" to break the teeth of "oppression," and pluck indigence from its devouring jaws. This Christ performed, when, having undertaken the cause of his people against the adversary, he "saved" them by his resurrection, and "broke in pieces" the power of the great OPPRESSOR.

5. *They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations.*

The kingdom of Solomon continued, in his own person, only for forty years; but in his seed, that is, Christ, it is established throughout all generations. HE reigneth "over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end:" Luke, i. 33. His dominion over the world by his providence, and in the church by the influences of his grace, is to be coeval with that of the celestial luminaries in nature. And when the "moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed," when the heavens shall be dissolved, and the earth burnt up, "the Lord of hosts shall reign on Mount Zion," in the Jerusalem above, in glory everlasting. See Isa. xxiv. 23.

6. *He shall come down like the rain upon the mown grass: as showers* that *water the earth.*

Refreshing and salutary, as the drops of heaven to the shorn and parched grass, is the mild administration of a wise and pious prince to his subjects. And what image can convey a better idea of those most beneficial and blessed effects, which followed the descent of the Son of God upon the earth, and that of the Spirit, at the day of Pentecost? The prophets abound with descriptions of those great events, couched in terms borrowed from the philosophy of rain and dew. See Isa. xliv. 3, lv. 10. Hos. xiv. 5. Heb. vi. 7. In the last words of David, the reign of Messiah is described under this figure: "He shall be as the tender grass, springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain." I cannot help subjoining Bishop Sherlock's masterly illustration of this passage—"There cannot be a more lively image of a flourishing condition, than what is conveyed to us in these words. The grass, which is forced by the heat of the sun, before the ground is well prepared by rains, is weak and languid, and of a faint complexion; but when clear shining succeeds the gentle showers of spring, the field puts forth its best strength, and is more beautifully arrayed, than even Solomon in all his glory." Disc. vol. v. p. 89.

7. *In his days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth.*

By means of rain and dew, the grass springeth out of the ground. In the kingdom of Solomon, through the influences of his wisdom, good men were encouraged, righteousness flourished, and the land enjoyed tranquillity. In the days of Messiah, the fruit of the Spirit of righteousness, and the fruit of righteousness was "abundance of peace." He was the true "Melchisedek," or "King of righteousness," and therefore the true Solomon, the "King of Salem, the Prince of peace." And HIS peace is to endure, when the moon shall have ceased to vary her appearances, and when a period shall be put to all sublunary vicissitudes.

8. *He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth,* OR, *land.*

As applicable to the kingdom of Solomon, this verse describes the extent and limits of the promised "land;" if it be interpreted of the wide extended empire of Christ, that empire knows no bounds, but those of the "earth" itself. The Hebrew word ארץ, is often used for both, and as the dominion of Solomon represented that of a greater than Solomon, both are comprehended in the same words. And it is observable, that when the prophet Zechariah foretells the advent of "the King of Sion," in great humility, "meek, and riding on an ass," he describes the extent of his kingdom in these words—"His dominion shall be even from sea to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth." Zech. ix. 9, 10.

9. *They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him: and his enemies shall lick the dust.*

Distant nations submitted themselves to the sceptre, and prostrated themselves before the throne, of Solomon, foreshowing the conversion of the Heathen world (in the figurative language of prophecy, frequently styled, "the wilderness") to the Gospel, and the lowly adoration to be made by penitent sinners, at the footstool of the King of glory. They who take not the advantage of the day of grace, will feel the rod of his power in the day of vengeance, when his "enemies" shall be subjected to him; when death himself shall be destroyed; and "dust shall be the serpent's meat." Isa. lxv. 25. Gen. iii. 14.

10. *The kings of Tarshish, and of the isles, shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.*

This verse suggesteth to our meditation

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several curious and interesting particulars, all tending to one and the same end. As, 1. The munificent presents and immense treasures, brought to Solomon from Tarshish, and the isles of the Gentiles: 1 Kings, x. 22, &c. 2. The coming of the queen of Sheba from the south, with her gifts and acknowledgments, to Jerusalem. 3. The offerings made by the eastern Magi, as the first-fruits of the Gentiles, to the Saviour of the world. And, lastly, the accession of the nations to the faith (even these "isles of the Gentiles,") bringing their glory and honor into the city of God. See Isa. xlix. lx. Rev. xxi. 24.

11. *Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him.*

It is said, 2 Chron. ix. that "all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom; that he reigned over all the kings, from the river even unto the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt; and that they brought unto him horses out of Egypt, and out of all lands." The dominion of Christ is universal; and it will appear to be so at the last day; when, before men and angels, he shall prove his claim to the title, "King of kings, and Lords of lords."

12. *For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and* him *that hath no helper.* 13. *He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy.* 14. *He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence; and precious shall their blood be in his sight.*

These three verses, considered as describing the just and merciful administration of Solomon, need no exposition. As prophetical of Messiah's reign, they may be thus connected with the context, and paraphrased—The kings and the nations of the earth shall accede to the church of Christ, induced so to do by the fame of his mercy, no less than by that of his majesty. They shall hear of the great deliverance wrought by him for the poor in spirit, who make their prayer unto him, confessing their sins, and acknowledging the inability of any creature, in heaven or earth, to recover them from their lost estate. These he shall spare, and pardon, and save, from sin, and from death, and from hell. He shall, for this purpose, break the snares, and destroy the power of their great oppressor, the devil; and so dear shall their blood be in his sight, that he shall shed his own for it; after which, arising to a new and immortal life, he shall accomplish the eternal redemption of his servants.

15. *And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba; prayer also shall be made for him continually,* and *daily shall he be praised.*

As Solomon's reign was long and prosperous, that of Messiah is everlasting and glorious: as the rich brought presents to the one; so the nations offered up themselves, their possessions, their souls and their bodies, to the other: as the former was continually "prayed for," and blessed by his subjects, who owed peace and plenteousness to his government; so, with regard to the latter, prayer is made ever in the church, for the increase and consummation of his kingdom; and "daily is he praised," by his people, for all the riches of grace, for all the comforts of the Spirit, and for all the hopes of glory, which they possess, and enjoy, through him.

16. *There shall be an handful of corn in the earth, upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon; and* they *of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.*

It is here foretold, that in the days of Solomon, wonderful shall be the fruitfulness of Judea; of the country in corn, by which the city is supported; and of the city in people, who, by their numbers, constitute the strength of the king. The fruitfulness of the country was to be so great, that from an "handful of corn," and that sown on the most barren spot, the "top of a mountain," should issue a produce, the ears of which would "shake" and wave in the winds, like the woods of "Lebanon;" while in the city, a fresh progeny of Israelites was still springing up, and advancing to maturity" like the unnumbered blades of grass, in a field which the Lord hath blessed: see 1 Kings, iv. 20, &c. Such, under the reign of King Messiah, was the amazing increase of the "word," when sown in hearts barren before; such the astonishing multiplication of citizens in the Christian church: as it is written, Acts, vi. 7. "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly." So let it be, blessed Lord, wheresoever thy Gospel is preached, throughout the world.

17. *His name shall endure for ever; his name shall be continued,* Heb. *propagated, as long as the sun: and* men *shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed.*

The person and kingdom of Solomon have been used all along as a channel, through which to convey a most illustrious prophecy concerning those of Christ. But here the type seems to be wholly absorbed in the great antitype. His "name," his saving name, "shall indeed endure for ever, propagated," with the faith, through all the generations of men, while the "sun," another of his representatives, shall continue to maintain his station in the heavens, and to diffuse his light upon the earth. In HIM, as it was promised

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to Abraham, shall all the true children of Abraham be "blessed" with the blessings of eternity; "all nations shall call HIM blessed," as they are taught to do in the remaining verses of this exalted composition.

18. *Blessed* be *the* LORD *God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things.* 19. *And blessed* be *his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled* with *his glory; Amen, and Amen.*

Blessed, therefore, be thou, O Lord Jesu! for thou art the Lord God, even the God of Israel, who hast wrought such miracles of mercy, for the salvation of the church: and blessed, by the tongues of men and angels, be thy holy and glorious name; and let the whole earth be filled with the amazingly transcendent and inconceivable majesty of thy most excellent glory, for evermore! So be it, so be it.

FOURTEENTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM LXXIII.

ARGUMENT.

THE person speaking in this Psalm relates, 1—3, the process of a temptation, occasioned by his beholding the prosperity of wicked men upon earth which he describes, 4—11, with 12—14, the suggestions of nature on the occasion; but, in opposition to these, grace urges, 15, the examples of saints, 16, the difficulty of judging concerning God's dispensations, and, above all, 17—20, the final issue of things at the last day, and the end of that prosperity, which had excited his envy. Perfectly satisfied with these considerations, 21, 22, he owns his uneasiness to have sprung from his ignorance; and 23—28, closes the Psalm with the most affectionate expressions of his full trust and confidence in the divine mercy and goodness. No temptation is more common, or more formidable, than that above-mentioned. A more powerful and effectual antidote to it cannot be devised, than this most instructive and beautiful Psalm affords.

1. *Truly God* is *good to Israel,* even *to such as are of a clean heart.*

This declaration seems to be the result of a long struggle in the mind of the Psalmist, between nature and grace, in which the latter proves victorious, and, notwithstanding all appearances to the contrary, determines, against the suggestions of the former, that God is the same good and merciful God to his church and people, if they do but preserve inviolable their fidelity to him, whether, in this world, they enjoy prosperity, or endure affliction.

2. *But as for me, my feet were almost gone: my steps had well nigh slipt.* 3. *For I was envious at the foolish,* when *I saw the prosperity of the wicked.*

Temptations impede the progress of the Christian in the way of righteousness, and incline him to fall; as it happens to one who walks in a slippery path. The temptation here complained of, is that excited by seeing wealth and honor in the hands of infidelity and villany, while the faithful servants of God are covered with infamy, and oppressed by poverty. A prospect of this sort is apt to make us distrust the love of heaven towards us, and its providence over us. For our benefit, therefore, in the course of this Psalm, the disease is particularized, and the remedy prescribed.

4. *For* there are *no bands,* or, *pangs, in their death; but their strength* is *firm.*

Health and strength are to be reckoned among those temporal blessings, which the long suffering of God sometimes permits the ungodly to enjoy. And accordingly we find men of that cast, who live without sickness, and die in a manner without pain: while others, of a contrary character, are worn with chronical, or racked with acute disorders, which bring them with sorrow and torment to the grave.

5. *They* are *not in trouble as* other *men: neither are they plagued like* other *men.*

Calamities, which overwhelm the small concerns of the poor righteous man, approach not the borders of the wealthy sinner. Far from poverty, as free of disease, he seems to pass his days exempted from the miseries of mankind, without labor or anxiety; and not so much as to think of those who, distressed on all sides, can scarcely earn their bread by the sweat of their brows. See this sentiment beautifully dilated, Job. XXI. See also Jer. xii. 1.

6. *Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain: violence covereth them as a garment.*

Among men who have not the love of God in their hearts, or his fear before their eyes, pride and oppression are the offspring of worldly prosperity. The daughters attend the mother wherever she goeth, and show themselves openly without reserve; "pride compasseth them about as a chain;" they wear it for an ornament about their necks, as gold chains, collars, or necklaces, were worn; see Cant. iv. 9, discovering it by their stately carriage; see Isa. iii. 16. "Violence covereth them as a garment;" it appeareth outwardly in all they say or do, and engrosseth the whole man; they are, as the English phrase is, "made up of it."

7. *Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish.*

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"A man may be known by his look," saith the son of Sirach, Ecclus. xix. 29. The choleric, the lascivious, the melancholy, the cunning, &c. &c., frequently bear their tempers and ruling passions strongly marked on their countenances: but more especially doth the soul of a man look forth at his "eyes." The "pride" of the ungodly, occasioned by great and unexpected success in the world, hardly ever fails to bewray itself in this way.

8. *They are corrupt, and speak wickedly* concerning *oppression: they speak loftily.*

Prosperity, in an irreligious heart, breeds "corruption," which from thence is emitted by the breath in conversation, to infect and taint the minds of others. A circle of fawning dependants is never wanting, to whom the poor, vain, and ignorant wretch, exalted in his own conceit above the level of mortality, may, from the chair, without control, dictate libertinism and infidelity, bidding defiance to the laws of God and man.

9. *They set their mouth against the heavens; and their tongue walketh through the earth.*

The blessings for which a christian praises his God, only cause the infidel to blaspheme him. So true is that of Solomon—"The prosperity of fools destroyeth them." What a pity is it, that the former should ever be less zealous and indefatigable in diffusing his piety than we know the latter is in propagating his blasphemies through the earth!

10. *Therefore his people return thither: and waters of a full* cup *are wrung out to them.*

It seemeth impossible to ascertain, with any degree of precision, the meaning of this verse, or to whom it relates. Some think it intends those people who resort to the company of the wicked, because they find their temporal advantage by it; while others are of opinion, that the people of God are meant, who, by continually revolving in their thoughts the subject here treated of, namely, the prosperity of the wicked, are sore grieved, and enforced to shed tears in abundance. Mr. Mudge translates the verse thus—"Therefore let his (God's) people come before them, and waters in full measure would be wrung out from them:" that is, "Should God's people fall into their hands, they would squeeze them to the full, they would wring out all the juice in their bodies." He takes "waters in full measure" to have been a proverbial expression.

11. *And they say, how doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High?*

They who interpret the foregoing verse of the people of God, tempted by the success of the ungodly to distrust his providence, suppose this and the following verses to be uttered by "them," as questioning whether God had any regard to what passed here below. But to avoid confusion of persons, I would rather suppose the foregoing verse (to whomsoever it may belong) to be parenthetic, and the verse now under consideration to be an epicurean, atheistical speech in the mouth of the wicked above described at large; after which, the Psalmist goes on, in his own person, as from the beginning, to relate the temptation which he underwent, and the issue of it.

12. *Behold, these* are *the ungodly who prosper in the world, they increase* in *riches.*

The temptation is now stated in its full force. "These" worthless, ungodly, blasphemous wretches, whose characters I have been delineating, "these" are the men who prosper in the world, who succeed in every thing they undertake, and roll in riches! What are we to think of God, his providence, and his promises?

13. *Verily, I have cleansed my heart* in *vain, and washed my hands in innocency:*
14. *For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.*

Nature will be apt upon this occasion to suggest, that all my faith, my charity, and my devotion, all my watching, and fastings, in short, all the labor and pains I have taken in the way of goodnes, have been altogether vain and fruitless; since, while the rebellious enemies of God enjoy the world and themselves at pleasure, I, who continue his servant, am in perpetual tribulation and affliction.

15. *If I say, I will speak*, or, *declare*, or, *preach, thus; behold, I should offend* against *the generation of thy children.*

The Psalmist, having thus particularized the disease, proceeds now, like a skilful physician of the soul, to prescribe a medicine for it, which is compounded of many salutary ingredients. And first, to the suggestion of nature, grace opposes the examples of the children of God, who never fell from their hope in another world, because of their sufferings in this. For a man, therefore, to distrust the divine goodness on that account, is to belie their hope, renounce their faith, and strike his name out of their list.

16. *When I thought to know this, it* was *too painful for me.*

A second reason why a man should not be too forward to arraign God's dispensations of injustice, is the extreme difficulty of understanding and comprehending the whole of them, which indeed is not to be done by the human mind, unless God himself shall vouchsafe it the necessary information. "It was too painful for me," says the Psalmist;

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17. *Until I went into the sanctuary of God;* then *understood their end.*

The third argument, with which we may repress the spirit of murmuring and distrust, so apt to be excited by the prosperity of the wicked, is one communicated to us by the word of God, which alone can acquaint us with what is to be the "end," the final portion of sinners at the last day. This is an arrow from the heavenly quiver, which brings down our enemy at once, and lays Dagon prostrate before the ark.

18. *Surely thou didst*, or, *dost, set them in slippery places; thou castedst them down into destruction.*

Worldly prosperity is as the narrow and slippery summit of a mountain, on which, to answer the designs of his providence, God permits the wicked, during his pleasure, to take their station; till at length the fatal hour arrives, when, by a stroke unseen, they fall from thence, and are lost in the fathomless ocean of sorrow, torment, and despair.

19. *How are they* brought *into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors.*

The sudden alteration which death makes in the state of a powerful and opulent sinner, cannot but affect all around him, though they behold but one part of it. How much more would they be astonished and terrified, if the curtain between the two worlds were undrawn, and the other half of the change disclosed to view! Let faith do that which sight cannot do; and then the ungodly, however wealthy and honorable, will surely cease to be the objects of our envy.

20. *As a dream when* one *awaketh*, so, O LORD, *when thou awakest*, or, *causest them to awake, thou shalt despise their image.*

The life of the ungodly is a sleep; their happiness a dream, illusive and transitory; at best a shadow; afterwards, nothing. At the day of death, the soul is roused out of this sleep, and the dream vanishes. When God shall thus awaken them, he will "despise their image," he will bring to naught, and render utterly contemptible, even in their own sight, as well as that of himself, of his holy angels, and the spirits of the righteous, those imaginary and fantastic pleasures, for which they have lost the substantial joys and glories of his heavenly kingdom. Now, therefore, while it will not be in vain, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light:" Ephes. v. 14. See Job, xx. 4, &c. Isa. xxix. 8.

21. *Thus my heart was grieved*, Heb. *in a ferment, and I was pricked in my reins.* 22. *So foolish was I, and ignorant; I was as a beast before thee.*

The Psalmist, fully satisfied with the conduct of providence, reflects upon the folly of his former uneasiness, and humbly owns, that his doubts were occasioned solely by his ignorance of God's ways; while he formed his judgment of them without having duly taken into consideration the final issue of things. The last day, when it comes, will bring with it a solution of all difficulties. He who bears impressed upon his mind such an idea of that day, as the Scriptures can give him, may solve them now.

23. *Nevertheless, I* am *continually with thee; thou hast holden* me *by my right hand.*

The remainder of the Psalm contains the most dutiful and affectionate expressions of a mind perfectly at ease, and reposing itself, with comfortable assurance, on the loving kindness of the Lord, of which it had experienced a fresh instance, in its support under the late temptation, and complete victory over it. "I am continually with thee," as a child under the tender care of a parent; and, as a parent, during my danger of falling, in a slippery path, "thou hast holden me," thy child, "by my right hand."

24. *Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory.*

He who, but a little while ago, seemed to question the providence of God over the affairs of men, now exults in happy confidence of the divine mercy and favor towards himself, nothing doubting but that grace would ever continue to guide him upon earth till glory should crown him in heaven. Such are the blessed effects of "going into the sanctuary," and consulting the "lively oracles" in all our doubts, difficulties, and temptations.

25. *Whom have I in heaven* but thee? *And* there is *none upon earth* that *I desire beside*, Heb., *with*, or, *in comparison of, thee.*

The believing soul seems here to speak in the person and with the affection of a spouse, declaring, that not only earth, but heaven itself, would be unsatisfactory and comfortless, without the presence of her beloved Redeemer, the God of her salvation. But there is a pathos in the words themselves, which, though the Christian feels, the commentator cannot express.

26. *My flesh and my heart faileth:* but *God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*

None of these things, in the abundance of which the wicked place their happiness, can deliver us in the day of death. "Flesh" must revert to dust, and the "heart" must cease its beating. He alone, therefore, is the proper object of our faith and love, who can support, and carry us through the dreadful hour, and then raise us again, to be our "por-

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tion for ever." Lord Jesu, who hast so graciously promised to become our portion in the next world, prevent us from choosing any other in this.

27. *For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed,* or, *wilt destroy, all them that go a whoring from thee.*

They who are "far from God," are just so far from salvation; and of course, if they remain in that situation, must "perish." Nor have they reason to expect any other fate, who in their hearts depart from the holy Jesus, after he has betrothed them to himself in righteousness; and prefer to him the vilest and basest of his enemies, the world and the flesh, by whose wicked hands he was crucified and slain.

28. *But* it is *good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the* LORD *God, that I may declare all thy works.*

As if the Psalmist had said, in other words —Hear, therefore, the conclusion of the whole matter. Let others, dazzled by the blaze of worldly prosperity, forsake God, to obtain a share of it; or murmur against him, because they cannot obtain it. I am persuaded it now is, and finally will be, "good," delightful, profitable, and honorable, "for me to draw near," and join myself "to him;" which, in this life, I can do no otherwise, than by believing and hoping in his holy name; "I will put my trust in the LORD God," and excite others to do the same by "declaring his works," and dispensations; that all may perceive what an amazing difference will one day be made, between him who lusteth after the creature, and him who loveth the Creator.

PSALM LXXIV.

ARGUMENT.

UPON whatever occasion this Psalm might have been originally composed, it is plainly intended for the use of the church in time of persecution. 1, She bemoans herself as deserted by God; the return of whose favor she entreats, 2, on account of his having redeemed her; 3—9, of the ravages made, and, 10, the reproaches thrown out, by the enemy; 11—15, she reminds him of the wonders formerly wrought in her behalf, and, 16, 17, of his power and goodness, manifested in the common course of nature; 19, of the relation in which she stands to him; 20, of his covenant; 21, 22, of the honor of his name, and 23, the increasing fury of her adversaries, just ready to swallow her up.

1. *O God, why hast thou cast* us *off for ever?* why *doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture?*

God not only permits, but, by his prophet, who indited this form of words, directs the church, under persecution, to expostulate with him for having, to all appearance, finally deserted her. And that, in such deplorable circumstances, she may move his compassion, and, as it were, revive his love towards her, she is taught to remind him of that endearing relation which once subsisted between him and his people, the relation of a "shepherd" to his "sheep." The soul, when led into captivity, and detained in it, by a prevailing lust or passion, may make her prayer likewise in these words, adapted to her case.

2. *Remember thy congregation* which *thou hast purchased of old; the rod,* or *tribe,* or *portion, of thine inheritance,* which *thou hast redeemed, this Mount Sion, wherein thou hast dwelt.*

The Israelitish church pleads for mercy, upon these considerations, that God had formerly vouchsafed to redeem her from the Egyptian bondage, and to fix his residence on Mount Sion, all which would prove to have been done in vain, should he leave her, at last, in the hands of her enemies. The redemption by Jesus Christ, and his habitation in the church Christian by his Spirit, are the corresponding arguments to be urged, on similar occasions, by her, and by the believing soul.

3. *Lift up thy feet unto the perpetual desolations:* even *all* that *the enemy hath done wickedly in the sanctuary.*

God is represented as having withdrawn himself, and departed afar off; he is therefore entreated to return without delay, to view the long lasting desolations of the once highly favored city, and the ravages made by aliens in the sanctuary; which could not but excite in him compassion for his people, and indignation against their enemies. The outward calamities of a persecuted church should cause us to reflect on the sad havoc and devastation made by sin and Satan in the soul, which before was the city and temple of the living God.

4. *Thine enemies roar in the midst of thy congregations,* or, *places of worship; they set up their ensigns* for *signs.*

No sound can be more shocking than the confused clamors of an Heathen army sacking the temple; no sight so afflicting, as that of "the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place." Turbulent passions are the enemies, which raise an uproar of confusion in the heart; wealth, power, and pleasure are the idols which profane that sanctuary.

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5. A man *was famous according as he had lifted up axes upon the thick trees.* 6. *But now they break down the carved work thereof at once with axes and hammers.*

The difficulty of these verses lie altogether in the first word, יודע, without which, their literal construction is as follows—"As he who lifted up axes in the thick wood, so now they," the enemies above mentioned, "break down the carved work thereof," of the sanctuary, "with hatchets and hammers." Some interpreters render יודע impersonally; not "He was famous," but "It is well known," it is manifest, O God, to all the world, "that as he who lifteth up axes, so now," &c. Or, may not the sense be—"as יודע, a knowing, skilful person, one who understands his business, lifted up the axe in the thick wood, so now men set themselves to work to demolish the ornaments and timbers of the sanctuary." The words suggest another reason why God should arise and have mercy upon Sion, lest his name should be blasphemed among the nations, when they saw and heard of the sacrilegious and horrible destruction wrought by the enemy; whom neither the majesty of the temple, nor the reverence of its divine inhabitant, could restrain from defacing the beauty of holiness. The ornaments of the internal and spiritual temple, sometimes suffer as much from the fury of inordinate affections, as the carved work of the sanctuary ever did from the armies of Nebuchadnezzar or Antiochus.

7. *They have cast fire into thy sanctuary, they have defiled,* or *desecrated,* by casting down, *the dwelling-place of thy name to the ground.*

The gates of the second temple were set on fire by Antiochus; see. 1, Mac. iv. 38, but the whole fabric of the first was burnt by Nebuchadnezzar. When animosities break forth, and contentions are raised in the church, "fire is cast into the sanctuary;" when the soul sinks under a temptation, the "dwelling-place of God's name is desecrated to the ground."

8. *They said in their hearts, Let us destroy them together: they have burnt up all the synagogues of God in the land.*

Such is the rage of infidels, when it pleases God, for the sins of his people, to let them loose upon the church as beasts of prey. From scenes like these, we learn the temper and disposition of that raging adversary of mankind and his associates; who, if permitted, would root Christianity out of every heart. "Watch, therefore, and pray," saith the Captain of our salvation to all his soldiers.

9. *We see not our signs,* there is *no more any prophet, neither* is there *among us any that knoweth how long.*

Darkness is horrible in itself, and adds horror to every thing else. The church therefore complains, that in the midst of all her other troubles, she was deserted by the light of heaven. No "signs," or miracles, were exhibited for her comfort; there was no "prophet," to inform her concerning the will of God, or to promise her an "end" of her afflictions, as Daniel did when she was a captive in Babylon. Sin darkens the understanding, taking from it that light, the direction of which it then stands most in need of.

10. *O God, how long shall the adversary reproach? shall the enemy blaspheme thy name forever?* 11. *Why withdrawest thou thy hand, even thy right hand? Pluck* it *out of thy bosom.*

To an enumeration of calamities succeeds a prayer for deliverance, grounded on the necessity of God's vindicating the honor of his name from the insolent and blasphemous reproaches and scoffs of the enemy: see Ezez. xx. 19. He is, therefore, entreated to make bare his arm in the sight of the nations, and to let his right hand become glorious in the vindication of his name, and the defence of his inheritance.

12. *For God* is *my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth.*

And that he will do so, there is always reason for the afflicted church to hope; because, as her "King," he conducted and protected her of old, and wrought "salvation" for her upon the earth; temporal salvation by the hand of Moses; eternal salvation by the power of Christ.

13. *Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength; thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters.*

The first part of this verse alludes to that marvellous act of omnipotence, which divided the Red Sea, for Israel to pass over; the second part, to the return of its waves upon the heads of the Egyptians, who, like so many sea monsters, opening their mouths to devour the people of God, were overwhelmed, and perished in the mighty waters. The Christian church is taught to contemplate, under this figure, the salvation of her children, and the destruction of their spiritual enemies, by the waters of baptism: see 1 Cor. x. 2. and the Office for Baptism in the Church of England. Parallel to this passage in our Psalm, is that most sublime one, Isa. li. 9, 10, 11. "Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord! awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it, that

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hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon? Art thou not it, that hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep; that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over? Therefore, the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and mourning shall flee away."

14. *Thou brakest the heads of the leviathan in pieces*, and *gavest him* to be *meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness.*

"Leviathan" stands for Pharaoh, or the Egyptian power, represented by the Egyptian animal, the crocodile of Nile, the Egyptian river. The "heads of leviathan" are the princes of Egypt, the leaders of the Egyptian armies. And "the people, or inhabitants, of the wilderness," to whom they were given for a prey, are not men, but a species of wild beasts, hunting the deserts, for which the word ציים is used, Isa. xiii. 21. and xxxiv. 14. The sense therefore is, that the bodies of Pharaoh and his captains were thrown on shore by the sea, and so became food for the wild beasts of the neighboring deserts. The final destruction of the adversaries of Messiah's kingdom, is described at large under a like image, Rev. xix. 17, &c.

15. *Thou didst cleave the fountain and the flood*—that is, draw forth the *fountain and the flood*, by *cleaving* the rock—*thou driedst up mighty rivers.*

Two other remarkable exertions of the divine power in favor of the Israelites, are here referred to. Water was brought out of the rock, to satisfy their thirst in the time of drought; and the river Jordan was dried up, to open the passage for them into Canaan. In the former of these transactions, faith beholds the water of life springing from the Rock of Salvation; in the latter are discerned the mystic death and resurrection of Christians, as a prelude to the corporeal; when rising from the depths of the grave, they shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.

16. *The day is thine, the night also is thine, thou hast prepared the light and the sun.* 17. *Thou hast set all the borders of the earth: thou hast made summer and winter.*

From the miraculous interpositions of God, in behalf of his people, the church passes to those ordinary and standing evidences of his goodness towards us, the sweet vicissitudes of light and darkness, and the grateful succession of times and seasons; by which man is taught, in the most sorrowful night, to look for a joyful morning; and, during the severest winter, to expect a reviving spring. Thus is the revolving year our constant instructor and monitor; incessantly inculcating the duties of faith and hope, as well as those of adoration, gratitude, and praise.

18. *Remember this*, that *the enemy hath reproached, O* LORD, *and* that *the foolish people have blasphemed thy name.* 19. *O deliver not the soul of thy turtle-dove unto the multitude* of the wicked, *forget not the congregation of thy poor for ever.*

After endeavoring to support her own faith, and excite the zeal of God for his inheritance, by a rehearsal of former mercies, the church again urges the argument of "reproach," touched on before at ver. 10. and then reminds her Saviour of that endearing appellation of his "turtle-dove," by which he had not disdained to address her in times past. This turtle-dove, simple, defenceless, solitary, meek, timid, and mournful, was in danger of being speedily devoured by her inveterate and implacable enemies; who, like birds of prey, beset her on all sides, thirsting impatiently for her blood. What an irresistible force do these circumstances give to the words—"O deliver not the soul of thy turtle-dove unto the multitude of the wicked; and forget not the congregation of thy poor for ever!" Let us not fail, in the hour of temptation, to use them, and try the success of them.

20. *Have respect unto the covenant: for the dark places of the earth*, or, *the land, are full of the habitations of cruelty.*

The main anchor of the holy ark, in storms and tempests, is faith in the COVENANT of grace, made from the beginning in Messiah; communicated to Noah, Abraham, David, &c., as his illustrious representatives, and in them to the house of Israel; accomplished (as Zacharias beareth witness by his song, Luke, i. 72, &c.,) at the birth of Christ, and then extended to the Gentiles. To this covenant, and the promises made therein, the church here appeals, at a time when the enemy ravaged the promised land at pleasure, and every thing seemed to forebode the utter extirpation of the law and people of God. Hither, therefore, the soul is to fly for refuge, when nothing else seems capable of affording any.

21. *O let not the oppressed return ashamed: let the poor and needy praise thy name.*

It is for the honor of God, that they who have recourse to him for help, should not, by "returning" without it, suffer "shame" and confusion, in the presence of their insulting adversaries. And another motive to engage his assistance is, that, for every

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lost soul, there will be a voice the less in that choir, which is to "praise his name" to all eternity.

22. *Arise, O God, plead thine own cause: remember how the foolish man blasphemeth thee daily.* 23. *Forget not the voice of thine enemies: the tumult of those that rise up against thee increaseth continually.*

The church, growing more importunate in her petitions, as the danger increases, beseeches God to appear in her cause, as being in effect his own, on account of his promises, his attributes of righteousness and truth, and the reproaches cast on Him, through his people. While speaking, she seems to hear the tumultuous clamors of the approaching enemy, growing every minute louder as they advance; and we leave the "turtle-dove," without the divine assistance, ready to sink under the talons of the rapacious eagle.

FIFTEENTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER

PSALM LXXV.

ARGUMENT.

THE prophet, 1, gives thanks, with the church, to God for the manifestation of his NAME, and the wonders of salvation wrought thereby. 2. He declares his resolution of executing judgment and justice in his kingdom, which, 3, had been in disorder and confusion; 4, 5, he rebukes the wicked; 6—8, reminds them of the power, providence, counsels, and judgments of God; 9, 10, he concludes with repeating his resolution to praise God, to break the power of wickedness, and to establish righteousness.

1. *Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks,* unto thee *do we give thanks: for* that *thy name is near, thy wondrous works declare.*

The church offers up her repeated praises to God for her deliverance; she acknowledges the presence of his NAME in the midst of her, which had been evidenced by the "wonderful works" wrought for her salvation. Upon whatever occasion these words were originally endited, the Christian church now celebrates in them that great deliverance which, by so many miracles of mercy and power, hath been accomplished for her through Messiah, who is in Scripture frequently styled, "the NAME of Jehovah." See Isa. XXX. 27.

2. *When I shall receive the congregation, I will judge uprightly.*

The first verse was spoken by many persons; "unto thee, O God, do WE give thanks;" here the speaker is one, and that one is plainly a ruler, who promises, that when he shall have "received the congregation," or, as some render it, "when he shall have gotten an appointed, or fit time, or season," that is, when he shall be established in power and authority, at a fit time and place he will "judge uprightly," and introduce a thorough reformation into a kingdom, which, as we shall find by the following verse, stood greatly in need of it. From these circumstances it should seem most probable, that David is speaking of his advancement to the throne of Israel, and the intended rectitude of his administration, when he should be settled thereon. What David did in Israel, was done in the church universal, by him who sat upon the throne of David, when he "received" for his inheritance, the great "congregation" of the Gentiles, and the earth was full of the "righteousness" of Jehovah.

3, *The earth,* or, *the land, and all the inhabitants thereof, are,* or, *were, dissolved: I bear up the pillars of it.*

Civil distractions, and the continual irruptions of foreign enemies, had thrown the Israelitish affairs into confusion and "dissolved" the frame of government; until, by the re-establishment of royal authority, countenance and support were again given to all the subordinate magistrates; who are, in their respective stations, the "pillars" of a community. Such was the universal corruption and dissolution of manners both among Jews and Gentiles, when Messias, entering upon his regal office, reformed the world, raised the glorious fabric of the church, and made his apostles and their successors the "pillars" of his spiritual kingdom. Let men support religion; and God will support them.

4. *I said unto the fools, Deal not foolishly; and to the wicked, Lift not up the horn:* 5. *Lift not up your horn on high; speak not with a stiff neck.*

"Where the word of a king is, there is power." The prophet addresses himself to the opposers of his government, and the disturbers of Israel: he urges the "folly" of exalting themselves against their prince; and exhorts them, for their own sakes, to humility and obedience. Is not this the very message which the ministers of Christ have received from their King, and are commanded to deliver to the world?

6. *For promotion* cometh *neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south:* 7. *But God is the judge; he putteth down one, and setteth up another.*

The opposition mentioned in the preceding

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verse, was called "folly." In these verses it is proved to be such; as being an opposition, in effect, to the counsels of heaven; for, not by worldly power or craft, but by the designation and providence of God himself, the supreme judge of princes, and disposer of kingdoms, was the house of Saul "put down," and the house of David "set up." And are not, then, the enemies of the Son of God in arms against the Father; who, according to the promises going before concerning him, hath highly exalted him; hath committed all power and judgment to him; and hath put all things under his feet? Yea, and the hour is coming, when he shall put down all rule, and all authority, and power, and the Lord Jesus alone shall be exalted in that day. What will then be the portion of his impenitent adversaries, the next verse will inform us.

8. *For in the hand of the Lord* there is *a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and he poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof all the wicked of the earth shall wring* them *out*, and *drink* them.

As the choicest heavenly blessings are frequently in Scripture represented by the salutary effects of wine, a cup of which the master of the family is supposed to hold in his hand, ready to distribute due portions of it to those around him; so from the noxious and intoxicating qualities of that liquor, when drunk strong, and in too large a quantity, is borrowed a most tremendous image of the wrath and indignation of Almighty God. Calamity and sorrow, fear and trembling, infatuation and despair, the evils of the present life, and of that which is to come, are the bitter ingredients which compose this most horrible cup of mixture. It is entirely in the hand and disposal of God, who, through every age, has been pouring out, and administering of its contents, more or less, in proportion to the sins of men.—But much of the strength and power of the liquor still remains behind, until the day of final vengeance. It will be then exhausted, even to the dregs, by unrepenting rebels; when, "burning coals, fire, and brimstone," and eternal "tempest," shall be "the portion of their cup." Ps. xi. 6.

9. *But I will declare for ever: I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.*

These dispensations of mercy and judgment the prophet resolves to "declare" to the world forever, by thus "singing" the works and the "praises" of God, in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs. And while we now sing them, we declare our resolution to be the same with his.

10. *All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off:* but *the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.*

He determines likewise, as every good governor should do, to exert the authority with which he was intrusted; to break the power of triumphant wickedness, and to exalt that righteousness which exalteth a nation; hereby rendering himself a fit image of Him, who hath since done away transgression, and brought in everlasting righteousness, who will one day turn the wicked into hell, and exalt his faithful servants to reign with him in heaven. Already he reigns in them upon earth: causing "all carnal affections to die in them, and all things belonging to the Spirit to live and grow in them."

PSALM LXXVI.

ARGUMENT.

It is obvious, at first sight, to any one who reads this Psalm, that it was composed, as a thanksgiving hymn, on account of some great deliverance, wrought for his people, by the immediate hand of God. The miraculous destruction of the Assyrian army by the angel, in the days of king Hezekiah, is generally pitched upon, as the subject of it, and affirmed to be so by the ancient Greek inscription prefixed to it in the LXX version. The prophet, 1, 2, declares the glory which God hath gotten him in Israel; 3—6, describes the circumstances of the deliverance, with, 7, a reflection thereupon; 8—10, he mentions the effects it had produced among the nations, and, 11, 12, those which it ought to produce in Israelitish hearts. The ideas are to be transferred to the salvation of the church universal, by the destruction of sin and Satan, and the overthrow of the persecuting powers.

1. *In Judah is God known: his name is great in Israel.* 2. *In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Sion.*

On occasion of some great deliverance, the prophet speaks in transport concerning that presence and protection of God, which the higly favored Judah once enjoyed. She enjoyed them while she continued faithful, and really was what she professed to be. But, on account of her infidelity, and rejection of her Messiah, an alteration of circumstances has taken place. They are no longer Jews who are such outwardly; nor is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but they are Jews, who believe in the Son of God; and they are of the circumcision, who are cleansed by him from all filthiness of flesh and spirit. The Gentile

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Christian church hath succeeded to the privileges of the Israelitish. In her now "God is known" by the Gospel; and "his Name is great" in her, by reason of all the mighty wonders which he hath wrought for her: she is the true "Salem," or city of peace; she is the true "Sion," the spiritual, holy, and beloved hill; and in her is the "tabernacle," and "dwelling place" of God her Saviour, by the Spirit.

3. *There brake he the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle.*

When God appeared in the defence of his ancient people, the weapons of their enemies were at once blunted and broken, and all the formidable apparatus of war became, in a moment, utterly useless. Such was the event, when the holy Jesus entered the lists against our spiritual adversaries, "for" us; and such ever will be the event, when he engages them "in" us.

4. *Thou* art *more glorious* and *excellent than the mountains of prey.*

This may be a beautiful apostrophe to Mount Sion (mentioned ver. 2) as appearing infinitely more glorious and excellent, through the favor and protection of her God, than the arm of flesh and the instruments of war could render the kingdoms of the earth, which set themselves against her; and which, for their tyranny and cruelty, and the ravages committed by them, are likened to those mountains, where beasts of prey, with similar dispositions, rove, and roar, and devour. The powers of the world "make war with the Lamb, whose station is upon Mount Sion;" but "the Lamb, shall overcome them, for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful." Rev. xiv. 1, xvii. 14.

5. *The stout hearted are spoiled, they have slept their sleep: and none of the men of might have found their hands.* 6. *At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the chariot,* or, *rider, and horse are cast into a dead sleep.*

It must be acknowledged, that these two verses seem in a very particular manner to point at the miraculous destruction of Senacherib's army, when the "stout hearted," who doubted not of taking aud spoiling the holy city, were themselves suddenly "spoiled" of strength and life; they "slept their sleep, and found not their hands;" they awaked not again to the use of their powers and faculties; a rebuking blast was sent from the God of Jacob, under which the flower of Assyria withered in the space of a night, and in the morning was no more; "the horse and his rider were cast into a dead sleep;" they slept the sleep of death. How, in a moment, "were the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!" How astonishing the downfall of the tyrant! How complete the triumph of the daughter of Sion! Such will be the destruction of the world; such the salvation of the people of God.

7. *Thou,* even *thou,* art *to be feared; and who may stand in thy sight, when once thou art angry?*

Why are the miraculous exertions of omnipotence recorded in the book of life, but to suggest to us this reflection, that God, and God only, is the proper object of our fear; since neither the wisdom of the wise, nor the power of the mighty, no, not the world itself, can stand a single moment before him, "when once he is angry?" Yet we continue to dread any frowns but those of heaven; and one poor, vain, sinful man shall, through a course of sixty or seventy years, incessantly and undauntedly tempt and provoke him who destroyed 185,000 in a night. What is this, but madness?

8. *Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared, and was still;* 9. *When God arose to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth,* or, *the afflicted of the land.*

A destruction so far exceeding human power, was evidently the sentence of God's judgment, audibly pronounced from the eternal throne; and it was heard by all the earth with an awful silence, as when he speaks to attentive nature in thunder. Such was the effect which this interposition in behalf of his people produced among the surviving Assyrians, and the neighboring nations. Let us carry our thoughts on to the sensations which will be felt in the hearts of men, at that hour when the last trump shall sound in the heavens, and the earth shall shake from her foundations; when God shall arise to execute judgment on the adversaries of his church; and to save, with an everlasting salvation, all the meek and afflicted of the earth.

10. *Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.*

The wrath of man, and of Satan himself, against the church, turns, in the end, to the praise and glory of God, who represses it when at its height; and at all times appoints those bounds which it cannot pass, any more than the raging waves of the ocean can overflow their appointed barrier of sand.

11. *Vow and pay unto the* LORD *your God; let all that are round about him bring presents unto him that ought to be feared.* 12. *He shall cut off,* or, *restrain, the spirit of*

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princes; he is *terrible to the kings of the earth.*

If such should have been the gratitude and devotion of Israelites, for a temporary deliverance from the fury of an earthly tyrant; how much higher ought that of Christians to rise, for eternal redemption from the great oppressor! How ought they to "vow and pay their vows unto the LORD their God; to bring presents," to offer all they have, and all they are, to him who is so greatly "to be feared," so highly to be loved; to him who "restrains" the fury of evil angels, as well as "the spirit of princes;" and is "terrible" to the powers of darkness, no less than to "the kings of the earth!"

PSALM LXXVII.

ARGUMENT.

As the foregoing Psalm was evidently composed when the church had obtained deliverance from her enemies, this seems no less plainly to have been written at a time when she was in captivity under them. It contains, 1—4, a complaint of sufferings; and, 5—20, a description at large of the struggle between distrust and faith; which latter prevails, by having recourse to the consideration of ancient mercies; particularly, that of redemption from Egypt. The Psalm is admirably calculated for the use and consolation of any church, or soul, when in affliction and distress.

1. *I cried unto God with my voice,* even *unto God with my voice; and he gave ear unto me.*

Uneasiness in the heart will utter itself by the "voice;" and when the pain is intense, the "cry" will be loud. Only let it take a right direction, and ascend to heaven; let the application be made to "God," who will both "hear" and help; not to the world, which will not do one, and cannot do the other. The cries of the Son of God alone were heard for his own sake; the cries of all other men are heard for his sake.

2. *In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord: my sore ran in the night, and ceased not;* Heb. *my hand was stretched out in the night, and ceased not,* or, *without intermission; my soul refused to be comforted.*

To a soul deeply sensible of the world's vanity, and the misery of sin, every day is a "day of trouble," and the whole time of her pilgrimage is a long, dark, and wearisome "night," during which she seeks after her beloved by prayer; and, for the sake of him, and those future joys which she expects in his presence, the pleasures of sense are put away from her, and she "refuses to be comforted" by such comforters. An Israelite cannot enjoy himself in Babylon; a Christian cannot find perfect satisfaction in the world: a return to Jerusalem will employ the thoughts of both.

3. *I remembered God, and was troubled; I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed;* or, *I remembered God, and made a noise:* i. e. in prayer to him; *I meditated, and my spirit was obscured,* or, *darkened,* through grief and affliction.

This is a fine description of what passes in an afflicted and dejected mind. Between the remembrance of God and his former mercies, and the meditation on a seeming desertion under present calamities, the affections are variously agitated, and the prayers disturbed, like the tumultuous waves of a troubled sea; while the fair light from above is intercepted, and the face of heaven overwhelmed with clouds and darkness.

4. *Thou holdest mine eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak.*

Through grief and anxiety, it is, that the eyes are made to keep all the watches of the night, and wait in vain for sleep to relieve them from duty, until the dawning of the morning. To a night so spent, may a season of captivity or persecution be compared. Thus the ancient church looked for the first advent of Christ; and thus doth the church which now is expect his second; prolonging her vigils, even unto the dawning of that morning, which is at once to put a period to darkness and to sorrow. In the mean time, she giveth herself to meditation and prayer.

5. *I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times.* 6. *I call to remembrance my song in the night: I commune with mine own heart; and my spirit maketh diligent search.*

Recollection of former mercies is the proper antidote against a temptation to despair, in the day of calamity. And as in the divine dispensations, which are always uniform and like themselves, whatever has happened happens again, when the circumstances are similar; the experience of "ancient times" is to be called in to our aid, and duly consulted. Nay, we may perhaps "remember" the time, when we ourselves were led to compose and utter a "song" of joy and triumph, on occasion of signal mercies vouchsafed us. Upon these topics we should, "in the night of affliction, commune with our own hearts, and make diligent search," as Daniel did in Babylon, into the cause, the nature, and the probable continuance of our troubles; with the proper methods of shortening, and bringing them to

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an end, by suffering them to have their intended and full effect, in a sincere repentance, and thorough reformation.

7. *Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favorable no more?* 8. *Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth* his *promise fail for evermore?* 9. *Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?*

The Psalmist now relates the process of his meditations, and of that controversy which arose in his heart between faith and distrust. While he viewed the distressful scene around him, he found himself strongly tempted to question God's love of the church; to think that he had finally rejected his people; that the promised mercy of redemption would never be accomplished; and that indignation had constrained the bowels of our heavenly Father, which no longer yearned towards his afflicted children. These were the thoughts suggested to a desponding soul by the desolations of Sion at that time; and the state of things in the world may possibly be such, as to suggest the like thoughts to many in the Christian church, before our Lord shall appear again, for her final redemption. Imaginations of the same cast will offer themselves to the mind of the sinner, when the hand of God has lain long and heavy upon him, by the infliction of outward calamities, or the terrors of conscience.

10. *And I said, This* is *my infirmity:* but I will remember *the years*, or, *changes, of the right hand of the Most High.*

To the insinuations of distrust, faith now begins to reply. The sufferer checks himself in his former train of thought, and humbly acknowledges it to have sprung from a mind dispirited, and rendered timid, by misfortunes: "I said, this is my infirmity;" but he immediately strengthens himself by reflecting, that all "changes" in the conditions of men are effected, for reasons of infinite wisdom and goodness, by "the right hand of the Most High;" which is not shortened, but can still, as formerly, when he sees fit, deliver and exalt, as well as punish and depress, his people. What, therefore, though the daughter of Sion be in captivity, and her enemies insult over her? Messias cometh, who shall redeem her, and all nations; and then shall "the right hand of the Most High" work an universal and a glorious "change" upon the earth.

11. *I will remember the works of the Lord: surely I will remember thy wonders of old.* 12. *I will meditate also of all thy works, and talk of thy doings.*

Thus restored to a right frame of mind, the Psalmist, instead of brooding any longer over the calamities of his own time, resolves to turn his thoughts towards the divine dispensations of old; to meditate on God's former works and wonders; his works of justice and mercy, of power and wisdom, of nature and grace; and, by gratefully celebrating them, to invigorate his faith in the salvation to come, of which they were so many earnests and pledges. And it is this consideration, which makes the eucharistic Psalms ever pleasing, and ever comfortable to the mind; they are appeals to those attributes which have been so often displayed in the cause of the church; they are acts of faith, looking backward to the past, and forward to the future; they are praises, and they are prayers.

13. *Thy way, O God,* is *in the sanctuary*, or, *in holiness; who* is so *great a god as* our *God?*

Faith, now reinstated in its sovereignty over the prejudices and fears of the soul, and again placed upon the judgment-seat, pronounces the "ways" or proceedings of God to be such, as, when weighed in the balance of the "sanctuary," and judged of by the divine rule and manner of acting, will be found agreeable to the standard of perfect "holiness." An assurance is likewise expressed, that the power of God, however it may, for a time, lie dormant, yet still retains the same superiority, of which former exertions show it to have been possessed, over the gods of the nations, the elements of nature, and the powers of the world; insomuch that nothing, which was ever called by others, or called itself, "god," was able to stand before Jehovah, the God of Israel: "Who is so great a god as our God?" Thus, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth," saith our blessed Lord, Matt. xxviii. 18, for the everlasting consolation of the Christian church.

14. *Thou* art *the God that doest wonders; thou hast declared thy strength among the people.* 15. *Thou hast with* thine *arm redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph.*

Israel, in times of trouble and distress, was wont to look back to the "wonders" wrought in Egypt, and the redemption of all her tribes from that house of bondage. We Christians are taught, while we use the same words, to regard parallel, but more important transactions; we reflect on the "wonders" wrought for the bodies and souls of men, by the "strength and the arm" of Jehovah, revealed and manifested to the world in Christ; and we celebrate the redemption, not of "the sons of Jacob and Joseph" only, but of all nations, from the bondage of corruption; a redemption compared with which, the deliverance from Egypt, though glorious in itself, hath yet no glory at all, by reason of

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the glory that so far excelleth. Our confidence in God, during the seasons of affliction, should therefore rise in proportion.

16. *The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee; they were afraid: the depths also were troubled.*

The waters of the Red Sea are here beautifully represented as endued with sensibility, as seeing, feeling, and being confounded, even to the lowest depths, at the presence and power of their great Creator, when he commanded them to open a way, and to form a wall on each side of it, until his people were passed over; until his people were passed over whom he had redeemed. In this amazing transaction, let us behold, as in a glass, the salvation of believers by baptism, through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, who made the depths of the grave, as he had done those of the sea, a way for his ransomed to pass over; and the church, like another Israel, saw her enemies, in effect, dead at her feet.

17. *The clouds poured out water; the skies sent out a sound; thine arrows also went abroad.* 18. *The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven: the lightnings lightened the world: the earth trembled and shook.*

It is said, Exod. xiv. 24, that at the time when Israel was passing the sea, "the Lord looked upon the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, and took off their chariot wheels, and made them to go heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the Lord fighteth for them against the Egyptians." The verses of our Psalm now before us, seem to explain more particularly the manner in which the Lord "looked upon, and troubled, and fought against, the Egyptians," upon that occasion; namely, by thunders and lightnings, storms and tempests, rain, hail, and earthquake, the usual tokens and instruments of Almighty displeasure. Josephus, in like manner, relates, that the destruction of the Egyptians was accompanied by storms of rain from heaven; by dreadful thunders and lightnings; and, in short, by every possible circumstance of terror, which could testify and inflict upon man the vengeance of an incensed God. From scenes like these, we learn to form an idea of that power which discomfited the infernal host; raised Christ from the dead; vanquished opposition and persecution; subdued the world to the obedience of faith; supports and protects the church; will overthrow antichrist; raise the dead; cast the wicked, with death and Satan, into the lake of fire; and exalt the righteous, to sing, with angels in heaven, "the song of Moses and of the Lamb." See Rev. xv. 3.

19. *Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known.*

The dispensations and ways of God, like the passage through the Red Sea, are all full of mercy to his people; but they are also, like that, often unusual, marvellous, inscrutable; and we can no more trace his footsteps, than we could have done those of Israel, after the waters had returned to their place again. Let us resolve, therefore, to trust in him at all times; and let us think we hear Moses saying to us, as he did to the Israelites, when seemingly reduced to the last extremity; "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of Jehovah." Exod. xiv. 13.

20. *Thou leddest thy people, like a flock, by the hand of Moses and Aaron.*

The loving kindness of God towards Israel did not stop at the Red Sea, but he conducted his chosen flock, by the guidance of faithful pastors, through all the perils of the wilderness, to the land of promise. We likewise, through thy mercy, O blessed Lord Jesus, have passed the Red Sea at our baptism; and are now journeying in the wilderness. Give us those meek, and lowly, and tractable dispositions, which become the sheep of thy pasture; set over us skilful and vigilant shepherds; and be thou ever both with them and with us; until, having surmounted all difficulties and dangers, led by thy grace, and supported by thy providence, we all come in perfect safety, to the land of everlasting rest; there to live with thee, one fold under one shepherd, world without end.

FIFTEENTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM LXXVIII.

ARGUMENT.

THIS Psalm containeth a declaration of God's dealings with his people, and of their behavior to him, in Egypt, in the wilderness, and after their settlement in Canaan, to the days of David. It is written for the use and admonition of Christians; who may here view, as in a glass, the mercies they have received, and the returns which, alas! they have but too often made for them.

1. *Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth.*

In this verse, the Psalmist opens his commission, and speaks, as one having authority from above to instruct the world. He demands a large and attentive audience, while, by a series of examples, he sets forth the goodness of God, and the ingratitude of man,

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for the admonition of succeeding ages, to the end of time. St. Paul, speaking of the very transactions related in our Psalm, saith of them, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples, Gr. τυποι, types; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come:" 1 Cor. x. 11. We Christians, therefore, must consider ourselves as the "people" who are to "give ear to the law," or "doctrine," inculcated by the following epitome of the Israelitish history; WE must "incline our ears to the words of" the prophet's "mouth."

2. *I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old:* 3. *Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us.*

The Psalm, being in itself a plain narrative of facts, can contain nothing parabolical or enigmatical in it, unless those facts were, what St. Paul affirms them to have been, "ensamples," types or representations of other facts relative to the Christian church. As facts, they were "heard and known," and handed down from father to son; but, with respect to the instructions and admonitions comprehended in them, and to be extracted by an application to parallel times and circumstances, they had the nature of a "parable," requiring wisdom and attention so to understand and apply them. It is observable, that our Lord is, by St. Mathew, said to have spoken to the multitude altogether in parables, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables," &c. citing the second verse of the Psalm now before us: Matt. xiii. 35. If it doth not follow from this citation, that the prophet actually speaks the Psalm in the person of Christ, yet thus much at least is evident from it, that the history of old Israel somewhat resembles the letter of the Gospel parables, and contains, shadowed out under it, the history of a correspondent state of things in the new Israel, or church Christian.* And although the Psalm, like a large and capacious palace, be laid out into a multitude of different appartments; yet, perhaps, we may find, that the Scriptures of the New Testament will furnish us with a key, which will gain us admission into every one of them, and put us in possession of the treasures of divine wisdom therein deposited.

4. *We will not hide* them *from their children, showing to the generation to come,* Heb. *the latter generation, the praises of the* LORD, *and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.*

* "In parabolis"—Aliud dicit; aliud innuit; ac præteritorum specie futura præsagit. Id quoque ex personâ Christi: Matt. xiii. 35. BOSSUET.

The writer of this Psalm is desirous that "the praise of Jehovah, his strength, and the wonderful works that he hath done," an account of which had reached his own time, should be transmitted, through all the periods of the Jewish economy, down to the דור אחרון the "latter generation," or generation to arise in the "latter days;" the generation of the faithful, to be begotten unto God, from among the Gentiles, through the Gospel. Of this generation are we, who now, in these words of the holy Psalmist, do from age to age "show the praises of the Lord," our Saviour, "and his strength and his wondrous works that he hath done" for us, as he promised and foreshowed in his dispensations of old time. The glorious theme was delivered by the Israelitish to the Christian church, and will be resumed in heaven, there for ever to employ the tongues of saints, and the harps of angels.

5. *For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children:* 6. *That the generation to come,* or, *latter generation, might know* them, even *the children* which *should be born;* who *should arise, and declare* them *to their children.*

The account of God's dealings with his people to be celebrated in our Psalm, begins with the "law," or "testimony, appointed and established in Israel," by the hand of Moses. Under these names are comprehended, not only the precepts and ceremonies, but the several transactions to which they referred, and in commemoration of which they were instituted; as also that future salvation, to which they, as well as the transactions, had an aspect. Thus the passover, for instance, looked backward to the redemption by Moses, and forward to that by Messiah. The law thus considered, as involving the Gospel within it, was, to understanding and pious Israelites, the fountain of wisdom and source of delight. They were to meditate therein day and night, and teach their children to do likewise; until, with its types realized, and its prophecies accomplished, in the Redeemer, it should go forth out of Sion in perfect beauty, and run and be glorified among the nations. The "law" and the "testimony" are now become ours; and it is our duty to transmit them down to latest posterity, until Jesus shall return to judgment.

7. *That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments:* 8. *And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation* that *set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not steadfast with God.*

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The reason is here assigned, why God gave Israel a law, and commanded that fathers should teach it to their children, and their children's children; and the same reason holds with regard to the Gospel; namely, that the chosen people, renouncing the world with its idols and lusts, should believe and "set their hope in" the true "God," the only Saviour; that they should "not forget the works" which he hath wrought for their redemption; and that, ever mindful of those works, they should love him, and "keep his commandments;" not following the examples of the fathers of Israel, who proved "faithless" and "rebellious" in the wilderness, when God had brought them out of Egypt. This is the very use St. Paul makes of those examples. "With some of them," says he, "God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples," τυποι ημων "to the intent WE should not lust after evil things, or be idolaters, or commit fornication, &c. &c. as did some of them." 1 Cor. x. 5.

9. *The children of Ephraim*, being *armed*, and *carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle.*

As the context treats concerning the behavior of Israel in general, upon their coming out of Egypt; and as the cowardice of the tribe of Ephraim in particular, at that time is nowhere mentioned, it is therefore most probable, that one tribe is here put for all the rest; and that, under the figure of men, when prepared for battle, turning their backs at sight of an enemy, is pointed out that disposition of the Israelites, after all their promises, resolutions, and vows of serving and obeying God, to fall away, and relapse into sin, upon the first temptation. How often is this the case with the Christian soldier? Let not him, who hath but just put on his spiritual armor, boast, like him who is putting it off when the fight is over, and the victory obtained.

10. *They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law;* 11. *And forgat his works, and his wonders, that he had showed them.* 12. *Marvellous things did he in the sight of their fathers, in the land of Egypt,* in *the field of Zoan.*

These verses, it is apprehended, describe in plain terms, what was metaphorically expressed in the verse preceeding, namely, the proneness of the Israelites to break the "covenant," transgress the "law," and forget the "works" of God, even those astonishing works wrought in "Egypt," and in "Zoan," its capital city. Let the Christian, who perhaps is amazed at the frequent rebellions of stiff-necked Israel, reflect a little within himself, how he has observed the baptismal "covenant," how he has "walked in the law," and with what gratitude he has remembered the "marvellous works" of Jesus.

13. *He divided the sea, and caused them to pass through; and he made the waters to stand as an heap.*

From the miracles wrought in Egypt, the Psalmist proceeds to what happend at the Exodus. And here he fails not to mention that great work of Almighty power, the division of the Red Sea, which was ever uppermost in the thoughts of a devout Israelite; as the passage of the church, in Christ her Saviour, through the grave and gate of death, ought never to depart frem the memory of a Christian.

14. *In the day-time also he led them with a cloud, and all the night with a light of fire.*

During the forty years' pilgrimage of Israel in the wilderness, a preternatural column of fire and cloud attended the camp. It rested with them, and moved on before them, directing and conducting them in their journeys; in the night season it was a bright and shining light; and in the day-time it afforded a grateful cooling shade from the burning heat of those sultry deserts. Thus is Christ present with his church, while she sojourns upon earth, by his Word and his Spirit, guiding her steps, enlightening her darkness, and mitigating her sorrows.

15. *He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave* them *drink as* out of *the great depths.* 16. *He brought streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers.*

"Let us," saith Bishop Taylor, "by the aids of memory and fancy, consider the children of Israel in the wilderness, in a barren and dry land where no water was, marching in dust and fire, not wet with the dew of heaven, but wholly without moisture, save only what dropped from their own brows. The air was fire, and the vermin was fire; the flying serpents were of the same kindred with the firmament; their sting was a flame, their venom was a fever, and the fever a calenture; and the whole state of the Israelites' abode and travel was a little image of the day of judgment, when the elements shall melt with fervent heat. These men, like salamanders walking in fire, dry with heat, scorched with thirst, and made yet more thirsty by calling upon God for water; suppose I say, these thirsty souls, hearing Moses promise that he will smite the rock, and that a river should break forth from thence; observe how presently they run to the foot of the springing stone, thrusting forth their heads and tongues to meet the water, impatient of delay, crying

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out that the water did not move, like light, all at once: and then suppose the pleasure of their drink, the insatiableness of their desire, the immensity of their appetite: they took in as much as they could, and they desired much more. This was their Sacrament, and this was their manner of receiving it. And if that water was a type of our Sacrament or a Sacrament of the same secret blessing, then is their thirst a signification of our duty."*

17. *And they sinned yet more against him, by provokiag the Most High in the wilderness.* 18. *And they tempted God in their hearts, by asking meat for their lust.* 19. *Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?* 20. *Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also, or provide flesh for his people?*

These frequent rebellions of Israel, with the presence of God in the midst of them, and his miracles before their eyes, would seem incredible, had they been related any where but in the oracles of truth; and did not the heart of every self-knowing Christian at once acknowledge the picture which is here drawn of human nature, its incredulity and perverseness. For hath not God delivered us from the house of bondage, and supported us in the wilderness? is not Jesus present in tne church, and are not his miracles of love and mercy continually before our eyes, in the Word and in the Sacrament? Yet, who does not still "provoke" and "tempt the Most High?" who does not ask provision for his "lust," when his necessities are satisfied? and who, after all the proofs he has had of God's power and goodness, is not apt, upon every appearance of danger, to be diffident and distrustful of his providence? Before we condemn others, let us try ourselves, and judge righteous judgment. When David pronounced the words, "The man that hath done this thing shall surely die," little did he think of being told, by his faithful monitor, "Thou art the man." Conscience if duly interrogated, will be a Nathan to every one, and show him his own transgressions, in those of old Israel.

21. *Therefore the* LORD *heard* this, *and was wroth: so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel;* 22. *Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation:* 23. *Though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven,* 24. *And had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven.* 25. *Man did eat angels' food: he sent them meat to the full.*

The discontents mentioned above, in verse 17, &c. were posterior not only to the miracle at the rock, but also to the gift of "manna," which, after some little time, the people "loathed," and demanded "flesh," repenting that they had forsaken Egypt, where they fared more to their satisfaction: See Numb. xi. The cause of the discontents was infidelity, and the effect of them a display of God's indignation: "The Lord was wroth—because they believed not," &c. Now, as St. Paul styles the water "spiritual," or, sacramental "drink," proceeding from "a spiritual rock, which rock was Christ;" so he terms the manna, "spiritual," or, sacramental "meat: They did all eat of that same spiritual meat:" 1 Cor. x. 3. And our Lord, in John, vi. discourses at large upon the subject, to covince the Jews, that God, who gave to their fathers manna in the wilderness, had in HIM given them "the true bread" of eternal life, which the manna was intended to represent. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give, is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." Christ crucified is the support of spiritual and eternal life; faith is the mouth by which this support is received; manna was an outward and visible sign of it to the Israelites in the wilderness; the eucharistic bread is such to Christians in the world. When that holy ordinance is celebrated, "the doors of heaven are opened," spiritual food is given from above, "and man eats לחם אבירים, the bread of the mighty ones;" whether by "mighty ones" we understand those who eat the bread, and are invigorated thereby, or the blessed persons who give the bread to man. Such is our manna, our substance in the wilderness, our viaticum, while on the road to Canaan. But how is it "loathed," and despised, in comparison with "the flesh pots of Egypt," by men who "believe not in God, and trust not in his salvation!" Will not the same cause produce the same effect? Will not "Jehovah hear this, and be wroth?" Will not "a fire be kindled against Jacob, and anger also come up against Israel?" "For this cause," saith an apostle to the irreverent Corinthian receivers, "many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." 1 Cor. xi. 30.

26. *He caused an east wind to blow in the heaven: and by his power he brought in the south wind.* 27. *He rained flesh also upon them as dust, and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea.* 28. *And he let it fall in the*

* Worthy Communicant, p, 92.

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midst of their camp, round about their habitations. 29. *So they did eat, and were well filled: for he gave them their own desire:* 30. *They were not estranged from their lust. But while the meat* was *yet in their mouths,* 31. *The wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them, and smote down the chosen* men *of Israel.*

The people, discontented with manna, asked, in a tumultuous and rebellious way, for flesh, at the same time distrusting the power of God to give it them in the wilderness. Flesh, however, was procured. A wind, proper for the occasion, went forth from Jehovah, and brought a cloud of quails, which furnished the whole camp with a most delicious kind of flesh food, for the space of an entire month. But from the event we learn, that inordinate desires, though sometimes complied with, and satisfied by heaven, do not therefore go unpunished; on the contrary, they are often punished by being complied with. The blessings, chosen for us by God, are blessings indeed, and, like the manna, bring no sorrow with them: but when we choose for ourselves, and are so unhappy as to be gratified in that choice, our portion too often proves a curse; and, while the much-loved morsel is yet between our teeth, "the wrath of God comes upon us," for making a wrong choice. This will always be the case in the end, whenever earth is preferred to heaven, and sense to faith.

32. *For all this they sinned still, and believed not for his wondrous works.* 33. *Therefore their days did he consume in vanity, and their years in trouble.*

Mercies are followed by provocations; provocations are punished with judgments; to judgments succeed repeated provocations, which call down fresh judgments. Immediately after the history of the quails, we read of a sedition stirred up by Aaron and Miriam, and of new murmurs at the report, brought by the spies, concerning the promised land; in consequence of which last, the nation had been destroyed, but for the intercession of Moses; and the whole generation of those who came out of Egypt, except Joshua and Caleb, actually fell in the wilderness, wasted and consumed by various plagues and calamities, during a forty years' peregrination: see Numb. xii. xiii. xiv. St. Jude makes mention of such a generation in the early days of the Christian church, speakers of "hard speeches against Christ, murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts;" and he therefore puts converts "in remembrance, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not;" Jude, verse 5 and 15. Because, notwithstanding all that Jesus has done, and continues to do for the church, men "sin yet more, and believe not for his wondrous works," but either despise the heavenly country, or despair of obtaining it, therefore is the hand of God heavy upon the world; "vanity and trouble" wear out the life of man; and they who have passed the waters of baptism, fall short of the promised rest.

34. *When he slew them, then they sought him: and they returned, and inquired early after God.* 35. *And they remembered that God* was *their rock, and the high God their redeemer.* 36. *Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues.* 37. *For their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant.*

Several instances of this behavior occur in the history of Korah's rebellion and punishment, of the fiery serpents, and of Israel and Moab: see Numb. xvi. xx. xxi. xxv. The Israelites, in this particular, resembled their great persecutor Pharaoh; their repentance, which came with the divine judgments, went also away with them, and appeared no more. By night the dew falleth from heaven, and refresheth the weary ground, and causeth the green herb and the flower to revive and spring; but in the morning the sun ariseth with a burning heat, and presently the dew is evaporated, the grass withereth, the flower fadeth, and the ground again becometh parched and dry, as before. Thus it is with man. Adversity is the night, and grace is the dew, by which his heart is made tender and religious, and good resolutions are formed, and begin to shoot; but returning prosperity has the force and effect of a summer sun; at its presence piety vanisheth, resolutions come to nothing, and the heart is once more hardened. "O Ephraim," exclaims Jehovah by his prophet, "what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it passes away:" Hos. vi. 4. Who, that hath been conversant in the house of mourning, and about the bed of sickness, but must have seen frequent instances of a temporary and deceitful repentance? Whose heart doth not reproach him with some of these backslidings of Israel? In the day, therefore, of health, and strength, and prosperity, before the indignation of heaven break forth, and the right-aiming thunderbolts fly abroad, from a motive of love, not of fear, let us "seek early after God, and return from our sins, remembering the rock of our salvation, and the high God, our Redeemer." Thus may we entertain

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some hope, that our conversion is sincere; that we do not "flatter and lie" unto our Maker; that our "heart is right with him," and we shall continue "steadfast in his covenant." And then, a plant that is set and lives in the heat of the day, how will it thrive and flourish under the cool and moist influences of night!

38. *But he* being *full of compassion, forgave* their *iniquity, and destroyed* them *not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath.* 39. *For he remembered that they* were but *flesh; a wind* or *breath, that passeth away, and cometh not again.*

Had God "stirred up all his wrath," the Israelites must have been exterminated in the wilderness. But then the promises made to Abraham, of mercy and "compassion" to them, and by them to all mankind, had failed. Therefore they were "forgiven," and not "destroyed;" judgment was executed, from time to time, upon the person of offenders; but still a remnant was left; the nation subsisted, until the Seed came to whom the promise was made. Nay, although, in consequence of their last and greatest crime, their polity was subverted with their city and temple, the race is yet marvellously preserved; and, we trust, preserved for mercy to be shown them in the last days. Be not angry, O Lord Jesu, for ever with them, or with us; but remember of what materials we are made, and into what a state we are fallen; how weak and how frail we are; how liable to be seduced into sin, and blinded by error: remember this, O Lord, and forgive us; and teach us to remember it, that we may forgive one another.

40. *How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness,* and *grieve him in the desert!* 41. *Yea, they turned back, and tempted God, and limited the holy One of Israel.* 42. *They remembered not his hand,* nor *the day when he delivered them from the hand of the enemy:* 43. *How he had wrought his signs in Egypt, and his wonders in the field of Zoan.*

The question which the Psalmist here asks, concerning Israel in the wilderness, is elsewhere asked by him concerning mankind in general: "Who can tell how of the offendeth?" Ps. xix. 12. God informs Moses, who had interceded for the people, and, in the name of the great Mediator, obtained their pardon, that "those men which had seen his glory, and his miracles which he did in Egypt and in the wilderness, had tempted him ten times, and had not hearkened to his voice;" Numb. xiv. 22. Forgetfulness of the mercies of redemption is the beginning of sin; and though every one knows how to resent and detest the crime of ingratitude in another, he yet thinks that his best benefactor will overlook the most flagrant instances of it in himself.

44. *And had turned their rivers into blood, and their floods, that they could not drink.* 45. *He sent divers sorts of flies,* Heb. *a mixture,* whether of beasts, or insects, noisome and destructive, *among them, which devoured them; and frogs, which destroyed them.* 46. *He gave also their increase unto the caterpillar, and their labor unto the locust.* 47. *He destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycamore trees with frost.* 48. *He gave up their cattle also to the hail, and their flocks to hot thunderbolts,* or, *flashes of lightning.*

The Psalm goes back to the subject of Israelitish ingratitude, mentioned at the beginning, verse 11, 12, in order to introduce an account of the miracles wrought in Egypt previous to the Exodus. These miracles were intended to evince the superiority of Jehovah over the elements and powers of nature, which at that time were objects of worship amongst the Egyptians, but plainly appeared to act at the command of Moses, in subordination to their great Creator, the God of the Hebrews. In the heavens, on the earth, and in the waters, supremacy and independency were demonstrated to belong to him only: fire and air, thunder and lightning, wind, rain, and hail, obeyed his word: rivers became blood, and their inhabitants perished; insects and animals left their wonted habitations, to destroy vegetables, or torment man: so that wherever the gods of Egypt were supposed to reside, and to exert their influences in favor of their votaries, in all places, and all circumstances, victory declared for Jehovah. Hence modern as well as ancient idolaters may learn not to put their trust in the world, but in him who made, and who can and will destroy, it; whose power can render the most insignificant of his creatures instruments of his vengeance, and, in a moment, arm all the elements against sinners; and whose mercy will employ that power in the final salvation of the church; when, as the author of the book of Wisdom expresseth it, "He shall make the creature his weapon for the revenge of his enemies, and the world shall fight for him against the unwise:" Wisdom, v. 17, 20. The curious and striking reflections which that author makes on the plagues of Egypt, in chap. xi. xvii. xviii. xix. are well worthy an attentive perusal. It is also to be observed, that St. John describes the judgments of the last days in terms plainly alluding to those poured out upon the Egyptians, "as locusts and frogs; blood and darkness," &c. See Rev. ix. and xvi. et al. Under these images

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are represented, false teachers and erroneous doctrines, carnality and ignorance, and, in a word, whatever contributes to ravage the moral or spiritual world, to deface the beauty of holiness, and destroy the fruits of faith. And of all the divine judgments, these are by far the most dreadful, though generally the least dreaded.

49. *He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels* among them.

Some of the Egyptian plagues having been specified in the foregoing verses, others of them are here thrown together, and the whole scene is affirmed to have been a full display of wrath and vengeance, executed upon the oppressors of the church by מלאכים רעים, "evil angels, agents, or messengers:" whether by this expression we understand the material instruments of divine displeasure; or angels employed as ministers of vengeance; or the actual appearance and ministration of evil spirits, suffered to torment the wicked in this world, as they certainly will do in the next. Tradition seems to have favored this last opinion, since the author of the book of Wisdom, above referred to, describes the Egyptian darkness as a kind of temporary hell, in which there appeared to the wicked, whose consciences suggested to them every thing that was horrible, "a fire kindled of itself very dreadful; they were scared with beasts that passed by, and hissing of serpents; and they were vexed with monstrous apparitions, so that they fainted and died for fear; while over them was spread an heavy night, an image of that "darkness which should afterwards receive them." Wisdom, xvii.

50. *He made a way to his anger: he spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over to to the pestilence;* 51. *And smote all the first-born in Egypt; the chief of* their *strength in the tabernacles of Ham.*

The last plague was the death of the first-born both of man and beast; Exod. xii. 29, when God, having removed every obstacle that mercy had thrown in the path of justice, "made a way to his indignation," which then rushed forth like a fiery stream. An unlimited commission was given to the destroyer, who at midnight passed through the land, and gave the fatal stroke in every house. "While all things, O Lord, were in quiet silence, and that night was in the midst of her swift course, thine Almighty WORD leaped down from heaven out of thy royal throne, as a fierce man of war into the midst of a land of destruction, and brought thine unfeigned commandment as a sharp sword, and standing up, filled all things with death: and it touched the heaven, but it stood upon the earth;" Wisdom, xviii. 14. Pharaoh and all his servants rose up in the night; there was a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt; and universal consternation reigned, inferior only to that which is to extend its empire over the world, when "the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised." May we be saved, like Israel, in that hour, through the blood of the true paschal Lamb, slain to take away the sins of the world! "When I see the blood," says Jehovah to his people, "I will pass over you."

52. *But made his own people to go forth like sheep; and guided them in the wilderness like a flock:* 53. *And he led them on safely, so that they feared not; but the sea overwhelmed their enemies.* 54. *And he brought them to the border of his sanctuary,* even to *this mountain,* which *his right hand had purchased.* 55. *He cast out the heathen also before them, and divided them an inheritance by line, and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents.*

Having related the punishments inflicted on Egypt, the Psalmist returns to those mercies experienced by the Israelites, when God overthrew their enemies, took them under his protection, fed and conducted them in the wilderness, brought them to the promised land, expelled the heathen, settled his people, and at length fixed his residence on Mount Sion, which is represented as the conquest and acquisition of his own arm; since the victories of Joshua, &c. were all owing to the divine presence and assistance. The Christian church, after her redemption by "the blood of the Lamb," passed 300 years in a state of minority, as it were, and under persecution, which, with allusion to what befel Israel of old, is called in the Revelation, her flight and abode in the WILDERNESS: Rev. xii. 6. At length the true "Joshua," or JESUS, "brought" her "into the possession of the Gentiles;" see Acts, vii. 45, and she enjoyed a temporary rest and prosperity. But no terrestrial Canaan, no secular advantages, should make us forget, as the Jews did, and as Christians are apt to do, that the church is in the wilderness, while she is in the world; and that "there remaineth yet" another and far more glorious "rest for the people of God," after which they ought ever to be aspiring. See Heb. iv. 9.

56. *Yet they tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies:* 57. *But turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers: they were turned aside like a deceitful bow.* 58. *For they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images.*

The Israelites, when settled in the promised

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land, soon showed themselves to be the genuine descendants of those men who tempted God in the desert. We can hardly read two chapters in the book of Judges, but we meet with the words, "And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord." For this their frequent revolting they are compared to "a deceitful bow," which, when put to the trial, is sure to disappoint the archer, either dropping the arrow at his feet, or carrying it wide of the mark. Their zeal and love were either wholly relaxed and enervated by sensuality and indolence, or else turned aside, and misplaced on false objects of worship. Thus, in the present decline of religion, the devotion of the Romanists hath attached itself to saints, angels, and images; while that of Protestants sleepeth, and must be awakened. In what manner, is known to God only.

59. *When God heard* this, *he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel:* 60. *So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent* which *he placed among men;* 61. *And delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand.*

Rebellion against God, will, sooner or later, draw down his vengeance, and cause the most beloved nation to be "abhorred" by him: he will forsake the place of his residence, "the tent placed among men," where he dwelleth by his spirit; and the church, by which his "strength" and his "glory" are manifested to the world, shall go, "into captivity, and the enemy's hand." All this we are taught by that which came to pass in Israel, when for the sins of priests and people, the ark of God, which then abode in Shiloh, was suffered to fall into the hands of the Philistines: 1 Sam. iv. The present state of Jerusalem, and of all the once-flourishing Eastern and African churches, speaks aloud the same awful and concerning truth. "He that hath ears to hear let him hear."

62. *He gave his people over also to the sword: and was wroth with his inheritance.* 63. *The fire consumed their young men: and their maidens were not given to marriage.* 64. *Their priests fell by the sword: and their widows made no lamentation.*

These verses refer to the slaughter of Israel by the Philistines, which was an effect of divine wrath, compared here, as elsewhere, to "a consuming fire;" they refer likewise to the death of old Eli, of Hophni and Phinehas, and the widow of Phinehas, who expired in child-bed, on hearing the mournful news: 1 Sam. iv. History abounds with the tragical stories of wars and captivities: Scripture informs us, they are the judgments of God against sin. But calamities affect us not, till they become our own; it is well if they reform us, even when they do become so.

65. *Then the* LORD *awaked, as one out of sleep,* and *like a mighty man, that shouteth, by reason of wine.*

While, by God's permission, the Philistines were chastising his people for their sins, he held his peace, and seemed unconcerned, as one asleep. But when due chastisement had brought the delinquents to themselves, the cries of penitent Israel awakened, as it were, and called forth the zeal of the Lord of hosts, to vindicate his honor, and deliver his servants: and then the vigor of his operations was such, as might be compared to the alacrity and courage of a mighty champion, when refreshed and inspirited by wine, he attacks his adversaries, and bears down all before him. Under all our sufferings, let us rest contented with this assurance, that God acts the part of a father; and will therefore remove the rod, when it has answered the end proposed.

66. *And he smote his enemies in the hinder parts: he put them to a perpetual reproach.*

The former clause of this verse may be rendered, "And he repulsed, or, drove his enemies back;" as Psalm ix. 3. "When mine enemies are turned back;" the word אחור being the same, in both places. But as that part of the sacred history is here alluded to, in which the Philistines are said to have been plagued with "emerods," or hemorrhoids, while the ark was amongst them, the passage is generally rendered, as in our translation, and supposed to intend that particular plague. Thus much, however, is certain, that Dagon fell before the ark, which his worshippers were glad to send back, with acknowledgments of the vengeance inflicted on them by the superior power of the God of Israel, who could punish where, and when, and how he pleased. See 1 Sam. v. vi.

67. *Moreover he refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim:* 68. *But chose the tribe of Judah, the Mount Sion which he loved.* 69. *And he built his sanctuary like high* palaces, *like the earth which he hath established for ever.*

The ark, after its return, went no more to Shiloh, which was in the tribe of Ephraim, the son of Joseph, but was brought first to Kiriathaim, 1 Sam. vi. 21. a city of the tribe of Judah, and from thence, after a short stay at the house of Obed Edom, to Mount Sion, 1 Chron. xiv. and xv. which was the chosen and highly favored mount: where was afterwards erected, by Solomon, a magnificent and permanent habitation for the God of Jacob, during the continuance of the old dispensation; a resemblance of that eternal temple, in which all the fulness of the God-

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head hath since dwelt bodily. The divine presence removed at this time to the tribe of Judah, because out of that tribe, after the rejection of Saul, came the great representative, as well as progenitor, of King Messiah.

70. *He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds:* 71. *From following the ewes great with young, he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance.* 72. *So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands.*

The call of David from a sheepfold to a throne teacheth us, that he who hath showed himself faithful in a few and small concerns, is worthy of promotion to more and more important cares; that the qualifications requisite for the due discharge of high offices, are best learned, at first, in an inferior station, especially if it be one that will inure to labor and vigilance; and that kings are to consider themselves as "shepherds;" which consideration would perhaps teach them their duty better than all the precepts in the world. From the last verse, relative to David's manner of conducting himself after his advancement, we learn, that integrity and discretion, when they meet in the same person, form a complete ruler, and one fit to represent that blessed person who entered, like his father David, through sufferings into his glory; who governeth his church in wisdom and righteousness; and of whom it is said, by the evangelical prophet, "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." Isa. xl. 11.

SIXTEENTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM LXXIX.

ARGUMENT.

THE argument of this Psalm is nearly the same with that of lxxivth. The church, persecuted and afflicted, sets forth, 1—3, the sacrilegious devastation, and cruel slaughter made by the enemy, with, 4, the reproach occasioned thereby; 5—7, she prayeth for redress and deliverance; 8, 9, confesseth and entreateth forgiveness of the sins which had brought these calamities upon her; and then, 10—12, asketh a removal of her reproach and misery; promising, 13, endless gratitude and praise for the same. We meet with passages of this Psalm, Jer. x. 25. 1 Macc. vii. 17, but when it was composed is not known.

1. *O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps.*

Three deplorable calamities are here enumerated by the faithful; the alienation of God's inheritance, the profanation of the sanctuary, and the desolation of the beloved city. When we represent, in our prayers, the sufferings and humiliation of the church, we take an effectual method of awakening the compassion, and recalling the favor of heaven. Every redeemed soul is the inheritance, the temple, the city of God. When sin enters, and takes possession, the inheritance is alienated, the temple defiled, the city desolated.

2. *The dead bodies of thy servants have they given* to be *meat unto the fowls of heaven: the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth.* 3. *Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem: and* there was *none to bury* them.

That horrible carnage which attends the siege and capture of a city, is the fourth of those calamities bewailed in our Psalm. To behold, or even to imagine, heaps of slaughtered bodies lying unburied, and exposed to birds and beasts of prey, is inexpressibly shocking to humanity. But with what unconcern are we accustomed to view, on all sides of us, multitudes "dead in trespasses and sins," torn in pieces, and devoured by wild passions, filthy lusts, and infernal spirits, those dogs and vultures of the moral world! Yet, to a discerning eye, and a thinking mind, the latter is by far the more melancholy sight of the two.

4. *We are become a reproach to our neighbors; a scorn and derision to them that are round about us.*

A fifth calamity, incident to an afflicted church, is to become, like captive Israel, the "scorn and derision" of infidels, who fail not at such seasons, to reproach her, and blaspheme her God. We know how to answer those who reproach us with our sufferings, for so their predecessors reproached our Master; but what shall we say, if we have given the enemy occasion to reproach us with our sins? The only real disgrace of religion, is the wickedness of its professors.

5. *How long,* LORD? *Wilt thou be angry for ever? shall thy jealousy burn like fire?*

Parched and exhausted, amidst the flames of persecution, we behold Sion panting for the comforts of redemption. The extent and continuance of her troubles, cause her to fear a total extermination; and, by the questions here asked, she tacitly reminds God of his promises not to give her up, and destroy her "for ever," on account of Messias, whom she was in the fulness of time to bring forth.

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6. *Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name.* 7. *For they have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling place.*

This, though uttered in the form of a wish, or prayer, is to be considered, like many other passages of the same nature, as a prediction of what would afterwards come to pass. Pagan ambition and cruelty were often employed to chastise offending Israel; but were, themselves, notwithstanding, justly punished, in their turn, by other powers raised up for that end. That relation in which the church stands to God, causes him, upon her repentance, to appear in her behalf, and to execute vengeance on her oppressors, who "know him not nor call upon his name." "We are thine," saith Isaiah, "thou never barest rule over them, they were not called by thy name." lxiii. 19. The church, for her sins, may deserve to suffer; but her enemies are not therefore without guilt, nor will they escape without punishment.

8. *O remember not against us former iniquities: let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us; for we are brought very low.* 9. *Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name: and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name's sake.*

Affliction hath then wrought its intended effect, when it hath convinced us of sin, and led us to repentance; when, brought back by it, like the returning prodigal, to the house and presence of our heavenly Father, we acknowledge our guilt as the cause of our misery, and entreat forgiveness of the one, in order to obtain a release from the other; not pleading our own merits, but the mercies of God our Saviour, and the glory of his name.

10. *Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is their God? Let him be known among the heathen in our sight,* by *the revenging of the blood of thy servants* which is *shed;* or, *Let the vengeance of thy servants' blood that is shed, be known among the heathen that is in our sight.*

It is for "the glory of God's name," to deliver his church; because, while she is in trouble, that name is blasphemed by the enemy, as if he wanted either power, or will to prevent or remove the calamities of his servants. Prayer is therefore here made by the faithful, that God, not to gratify any vindictive spirit of theirs, but to vindicate his own attributes, would break the teeth of the oppressor, and work a public and glorious salvation for his chosen: at beholding which, the very adversaries themselves might possibly be converted.

11. *Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee: according to the greatness of thy power preserve thou those that are appointed to die.*

Next to those who had been slain, the cause of such as groaned in captivity, lying bound in chains and fetters, under sentence of death, to be inflicted at the will of their cruel and insulting conquerors, is recommended to God. The Christian, though he may at present be subject to none of these external calamities, forgets not that he is often persecuted, and led captive, by his own desires, and bound in the chains of his sins; that the world to him is a prison; that sentence of death is passed upon him, and he knoweth not how soon that sentence may be executed. How properly therefore, and how fervently, may he, at all times, pray, "O let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee; according to the greatness of thy power preserve thou those that are appointed to die."

12. *And render unto our neighbors seven-fold into their bosom their reproach, wherewith they have reproached thee, O* LORD.

That is, as they have reproached thee with weakness, so manifest to others their weakness, who are but sinful dust and ashes; as they have endeavored to make thee contemptible, so let the world have just cause to despise them, who have thus presumptuously offended; according as it is written, "Them that honor me, I will honor, and they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed." 1 Sam. ii. 30. And however different the appearence of things may now be, this will certainly be found true, in every instance, at the last day.

13. *So we thy people, and sheep of thy pasture, will give thee thanks for ever: we will show forth thy praise to all generations.*

Such is the resolution of a church under persecution; and such ought to be the practice of every church, when delivered out of it, and restored to the favor and protection of her God. The same is the duty of every soul, with regard to afflictions and mercies of a private kind. But how glorious will be the day, when, triumphant over sin and sorrow, over every thing that exalteth and opposeth itself, the church universal shall behold the adversary disarmed for ever; while she herself, placed in pastures of joy, and led to the waters of eternal comfort, shall, from age to age, incessantly sing the praises of her great Shepherd and Bishop, her King and her God!

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PSALM LXXX.

ARGUMENT.

THE church, still in captivity, 1—3, crieth unto God for help and redemption; 4—7, complaineth of her grievous afflictions; 8—13, describeth her former exaltation, and present depression, under the beautiful figure of a Vine; 14—16, returneth again to her supplications, and, 17—19, prayeth for the advent of Messiah, to quicken and comfort her, vowing all loyal obedience, adoration, and praise to him, as the author of her salvation.

1. *Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest* between *the cherubims, shine forth.*

The Christian church is now become the "Israel" of God: Jesus Christ is the "Shepherd" of this Israel, who leadeth his people "like a flock;" he dwelleth in the midst of them by his Spirit, as of old he dwelt in the holy places, "between the cherubims." Let us beseech him to hearken to our prayers, and to manifest the glory of his power in our defence and deliverance.

2. *Before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, stir up thy strength, and come* and *save us.*

God is entreated to go forth, in his strength and his salvation, before the tribes of Israel, as formerly in the wilderness. Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, are particularly mentioned; perhaps, because, according to the established order, those three tribes immediately followed the ark and cherubim, the symbols of the divine presence. See Numb. ii. 18.

3. *Turn*, or, *restore, us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine: and we shall be saved.*

This verse is a kind of chorus, occuring three times in the course of our Psalm. It implies, that the church is in captivity, from which she prayeth to be "restored" to her former freedom and prosperity; that she expecteth such restoration, not from any might or merit of her own, but from the grace and mercy of her Saviour; as well knowing, that her night can be turned into day, and her winter give place to spring, only by the Sun of righteousness rising, and causing his face to shine upon her desolations. This ought, therefore, to be the wish and the prayer of every persecuted church, and of every afflicted soul.

4. *O* LORD *God of hosts, how long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people?*

The sins of a people may for a time "separate between them and their God, and hide his face from them that he will not hear:" Isa. lix. 2, "he may cover himself with a cloud, that their prayers should not pass through:" Lam. iii. 44, and seem to reject even the devotions of his distressed servants, while he is proving the strength of their faith, and the sincerity of their repentance. But if the former be strong, and the latter sincere, they will continue to ask, till they have obtained; nor cease to knock, till the door be opened.

5. *Thou feedest them with the bread of tears*, or, *of weeping; and givest them tears to drink in great measure.*

There cannot be a more striking picture of Sion in captivity. Her bread is dipped in tears, and her cup is filled to the brim with them: no time is free from grief and lamentation. They who sin, must submit to penance; which if a man doth not impose on himself, God will impose it on him: whereas, if we judged ourselves, we should not be thus judged of the Lord. The church hath appointed seasons, and given directions, for this purpose; but who observes either the one or the other?

6. *Thou makest us a strife unto our neighbors: and our enemies laugh among themselves.*

Israel, when forsaken by her God, was a prey for which all the neighboring nations contended, exulting over her, and scoffing at that condition to which, not their counsels or armies, but her own iniquities, had reduced her. Hence let us learn how to form a just estimate of the real state both of communities and individuals. Righteousness alone exalteth man; sin is his reproach, and will be his destruction.

7. *Turn us again, O God of hosts, and cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.* See above, ver. 3.

8. *Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it.*

God is reminded of the favor once shown by him to the church of Israel, and of that prosperity which she once enjoyed. She is compared to a "vine," removed, from the unkindly soil of Egypt, to the happier regions of Canaan, and there planted by Jehovah, in the place of nations extirpated for their unfruitfulness. The vine is a plant weak and lowly, and needing support; when supported, wild and luxuriant, unless restrained by the pruning knife; capable of producing the most valuable fruit; but, if barren, the most unprofitable among trees, and fit only for the flames. In all these respects it is a lively emblem of the church, and used as such by Isaiah, v. 7. by Ezekiel, xv. xvii. xix. and by our Lord himself, Matt. xxi. 33. The Chris-

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tian church, after her redemption, by the death and resurrection of Jesus, was planted in the Heathen world, as Israel had been in Canaan; and the description suits one as well as the other.

9. *Thou preparedst* room *before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land.* 10. *The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof* were like *the goodly cedars;* or, *and the goodly cedars* were covered *with the boughs thereof.*

As the vine striketh its roots deep into the soil prepared for it, and then diffuseth its numerous branches all around, covering the fertile hills, by the sides of which it is planted, or running up the lofty cedars, to the bodies of which it is joined; such was the growth and fruitfulness of the Israelitish church; but much greater was that of the church Christian. Her roots were fast fixed in the hearts and affections of the faithful, and her boughs shot forth abundantly; they often felt the knife, but increased under it, both in number and vigor; till, at length, she overshadowed the Roman empire with her branches, and replenished the earth with her fruit, grateful to God and man.

11. *She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river.*

This relates to the extent of Palestine, which was occupied by the tribes of Israel, even from the Mediterranean "sea," westward, to the "river" Euphrates, eastward. This was promised, Deut. xi. 24. "From the river Euphrates to the uttermost sea shall your coast be;" and fulfilled in the days of Solomon. See 1 Kings, iv. 21. Psal. lxxii. 8. To the Christian church the whole earth was the land of promise, and the Gospel was preached to all nations: "I will give thee," saith Jehovah to Christ, "the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." Psal. ii. 8.

12. *Why hast thou* then *broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way, do pluck her?*

The Psalmist, having described the exaltation of Israel, under the figure of a vine, proceeds, under the same figure, to lament her depression. She is now represented as deprived of the protection of God, the counsels of the wise, and the arms of the valiant; of all her bulwarks and fortifications, and whatever else could contribute to her defence and security; so that, like a vineyard without a fence, she lay open, on every side, to the incursions and ravages of her neighboring adversaries; who soon stripped her of all that was valuable, and trod her under foot.

13. *The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it.*

Fierce and unrelenting, her Heathen persecutor issued, at different times, from his abode, like a "wild boar" out of the forest, resolved not only to spoil and plunder, but to eradicate and extirpate her for ever. Nor let the church Christian imagine, that these things relate only to her elder sister. Greater mercies, and more excellent gifts, should excite in her greater thankfulness, and call forth more excellent virtues; otherwise, they will serve only to enhance her account, and multiply her sorrows. If she sin, and fall after the same example of unbelief, she must not think to be distinguished in her punishment, unless by the severity of it. She may expect to see the favor of heaven withdrawn, and the secular arm, instead of supporting, employed to crush her; her discipline may be annihilated, her unity broken, her doctrines perverted, her worship deformed, her practice corrupted, her possessions alienated, and her revenues seized; till at length the word be given from above, and some antichristian power be unchained, to execute upon her the full vengeance due to her crimes. Unclean desires, and furious passions, are the enemies of the soul, which deface her beauty, and devour all the productions of grace in that lesser vineyard of God.

14. *Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts; look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine:* 15. *And the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch* that *thou madest so strong for thyself.*

The church, thus distressed and desolated, offereth a prayer for the return of the divine favor, and for a gracious visitation from on high; she beseecheth God to look down, with an eye of pity, from heaven, on the vineyard, which his own hands had "planted," and on that royal branch, the family of David, in particular, which he had raised and established for himself, to accomplish his eternal purpose of saving mankind by Messiah, who was, one day, to spring from the root of Jesse. The Chaldee Paraphrast expounds "the branch," of Messiah himself, על מלכא משיחא, "On King Messiah, whom thou hast established," &c. So do the rabbies, Aben Ezra and Obadiah, cited by Dr. Hammond. And the LXX, instead of supposing the word בן "a son," to refer to "vine," and so signify a "branch," which, in the Hebrew style, is "a son of the vine," have rendered the passage, επι υιον ανθρωπου, "on the son of man;" an expression actually used by the Psalmist, two verses below. To the advent of this Son of man, Israel was ever accustomed to look forward, in time of affliction: on his second and glorious advent the Christian church must fix her eye, in the day of her calamities.

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16. It is *burnt with fire:* it is *cut down,* or, *dug up: they perish at the rebuke of thy countenance.*

The sad estate of the vineyard is yet again set forth, to excite the compassion of heaven. As to the latter clause of this verse, if it be rendered, as our translators have rendered it, in the present time, it seems to relate to the Israelites, and the destruction made amongst them by the wrath of God. If it have a future rendering, "they shall perish at the rebuke of thy countenance," it may be supposed to predict the fate of the adversaries, when God should deliver his people out of their hands.

17. *Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the son of man,* whom *thou madest strong for thyself.*

These phrases," the man of thy right hand," and "the son of man," if at all applicable, in a lower and subordinate sense, to a temporal king of Israel, considered as a representative of Messiah, are most certainly, in their full and prophetical acceptation, intended to denote King Messiah himself.* Assured of his coming, the church prayeth that the "hand," the protection, and the power of Jehovah might be "upon" him, over him, and with him, in his great undertaking finally to deliver her out of all her troubles, and to "lead her captivity captive."

18. *So will not we go back from thee: quicken us, and we will call upon thy name.*

The end of our redemption is, that we should serve him who hath redeemed us, and "go back" no more to our old sins. That soul which hath been "quickened" and made alive by Christ, should live to his honor and glory; that mouth which hath been opened by him, can do no less than show forth his praise, and "call upon his" saving "name."

19. *Turn us again, O* LORD *God of hosts: cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.* See ver. 3.

PSALM LXXXI.

ARGUMENT.

THIS Psalm, whensoever, or by whomsoever, composed, was, probably, intended to be sung at the feast of trumpets, as also at any other feast time. It contains, 1—3, an exhortation duly to observe the festivals of the church, 4, 5, as God had appointed, who is introduced expostulating with his people, on account, 6—10, of his mercies, and 11, 12, their ingratitude, and, 13—16, under the form of a most affectionate wish, renewing his promises, on condition of their obedience.

* "Virum dexteræ tuæ:" Davidem a te designatum et confirmatum regem, et in ejus figurâ Christum. BOSSUET.

1. *Sing aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob.* 2. *Take a psalm and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the psaltery.*

If Israelites were thus exhorted to keep their feast days with joy and gladness of heart; to exalt their voices, and join together all their sweetest instruments of music, in honor of him who had rescued them from the Egyptian bondage, and given them a law from Sinai; in what exulting strains ought we to celebrate the festivals of the Christian church? With what triumph of soul, and harmony of affections, are we bound to "sing aloud to God our strength," who hath redeemed us from death, and published the Gospel from Sion? since, as the apostle saith, "holy days, new moons, and sabbath days," of old, "were" only "a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." Col. ii. 16.

3. *Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day.*

In the Jewish church, notice was given of feasts, jubilees, &c., by sound of trumpet. All the new moons, or beginnings of months, were observed in this manner; see Numb. x. 1; but on the September new moon, or first day of the seventh month, was kept a great festival, called "the feast of trumpets;" Levit. xxiii. 24. Numb. xxix. 1, which, probably, is here intended. This September new moon had a particular regard paid to it, because, according to the old calculation, before Israel came out of Egypt, it was the first new moon in the year, which began upon this day, the first of the (afterwards) seventh month. The tenth of the same month was the great day of atonement; and on the fifteenth was celebrated the feast of tabernacles. See Levit. xxiii. 27, and 34. Our Psalm, therfore, seems to have been designed for the purpose of awakening and stirring up the devotion of the people upon the solemn entrance of a month, in which they were to commemorate so many past blessings, prefigurative of much greater blessings to come. We have now our feast days, our Christmas, Easter, Whitsuntide, &c. On these, and all other solemn occasions, let the evangelical trumpet give a sound of victory, of liberty, of joy and rejoicing; of victory over death, of liberty from sin, of joy and rejoicing in Christ Jesus our Saviour.

4. *For this* was *a statute for Israel,* and *a law of the God of Jacob. This he ordained in Joseph, for a testimony, when he went out through,* or *against, the land of Egypt:* where *I heard a language* that *I understood not.*

The meaning is, that the observation of feasts, with blowing of trumpets, was a statute, law, or testimony, ordained in Jo-

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seph, or Israel, by God himself, after he had destroyed the Egyptians, and brought his people into the wilderness, where the law was given. Concerning the words, "I heard a language that I understood not," it is difficult to account for the change of person; but the sense seems to be, That the children of Israel received the law, when they had been in bondage under a people of strange and barbarous language, or dialect. The passage is exactly parallel to that in Psal. cxiv. 1, "When Israel went out of Egypt, and the house of Jacob from a people of strange language," &c. The new law, with its sacraments and ordinances, was promulged after the spiritual redemption by Christ, as the old law, with its rights and ceremonies, was published, after the temporal deliverance by Moses.

6. *I removed his shoulder from the burden: his hands were delivered from the pots.*

From this verse to the end, it is plain, that God is the speaker. He reminds Israel of their redemption, by his mercy, and power, from the burdens and the drudgery imposed on them in Egypt. Moses describeth their then state of servitude, by saying, "The Egyptians made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field;" Exod. i. 14, that is, probably, in making vessels of clay, as this verse seems to imply. Let us remember, that we have been eased of far heavier burdens, delivered from severer taskmasters, and freed from a baser drudgery; the intolerable load of sin, the cruel tyranny of Satan, the vile service and bitter bondage of concupiscence.

7. *Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee: I answered thee in the secret place of thunder: I proved thee at the waters of Meribah.*

God declares his readiness, at all times, to hear the prayers and relieve the distresses of his people, as he did when they cried unto him from Egypt, and in the wilderness, and received answers from the cloudy pillar. In that deep recess he had fixed his awful throne, and from thence, on proper occasions, he manifested his power and glory, protecting Israel, and confounding their adversaries. In Psalm xcix. 6, it is said of "Moses, Aaron," &c., "They called upon the Lord, and he answered them: he spake unto them in the cloudy pillar;" which passage seems exactly parallel to that in the verse under consideration—"Thou calledst, and—I answered thee in the secret place of thunder." He who spake unto Israel in the cloudy pillar, hath since spoken to us by his Son: he who "proved them at the waters of Meribah," Exod. xvii. 6, 7, now proves us, by various trials, in the world.

8. *Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee: O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me;* 9. *There shall no strange god be in thee; neither shalt thou worship any strange god.* 10. *I* am *the* LORD *thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.*

God here addresseth himself to the Israelites, putting them in remembrance of that first and great commandment against idolatry; of his claim to their obedience, as their God and Saviour; and of his being both able and willing to satisfy the utmost desires and wishes of such, as would apply to him for blessing and comfort. Behold, then, the rebellion, the ingratitude, and the folly of that man, who saith to any creature, "Thou art my god;" who bestoweth on the world that fear, love, and adoration, which are due only to its Creator and Redeemer; who wasteth his days in seeking after happiness, where all, by their inquietude, acknowledge that it is not to be found.

11. *But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me.* 12. *So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust:* and *they walked in their own counsels.*

By the subject of an earthly prince, it is justly deemed a great honor for his sovereign to converse with him, to counsel and advise him: but from sinful dust and ashes, we hear the Majesty of heaven complaining, that he cannot obtain an audience; no one will attend to, or observe, his salutary admonitions. When we see men enabled, by wealth and power, to accomplish the inordinate desires of their hearts, and carry their worldly schemes into execution, without meeting with any obstructions in their way, we are apt to envy their felicity; whereas such prosperity in wickedness is the surest mark of divine displeasure, the heaviest punishment of disobedience, both in individuals and communities. "My people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would none of me: so I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels."

13. *O that my people had hearkened unto me,* and *Israel had walked in my ways!* 14. *I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries.*

Such are the tender mercies of our God, that he is not only careful to provide for us the means of salvation, but represents himself as mourning with a paternal affection over his children, when their frowardness and obstinacy disappoint the efforts of his love. One cannot help observing the similitude between the complaint here uttered, and one which hath been since breathed forth, over the same people: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem,

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how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

15. *The haters of the* LORD *should have submitted themselves unto him;* or, *should have failed,* or, *been subdued to him; but their time,* i. e. the time of his people, *should have endured for ever.*

The transgressions of the church give her enemies all their power against her, calling the avenger from afar, and setting an edge on the sword of the persecutor. "Where the carcase is," where the spirit of religion is departed, and has left the body to corrupt and decay, "there the eagles are gathered together;" all the instruments of vengeance, terrestrial and infernal, flock, by permission, to the prey. Had not this been the case with regard to Israel, Jerusalem had continued to be, through all ages, what she was in the days of Solomon, the delight of the nations, and the joy of the whole earth.

16. *He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee.*

That is, the Israelites, if obedient, would still have enjoyed the sweets of that good land, in which the Lord their God had placed them, where the fruits of the earth were produced in the highest perfection, and honey streamed from the very rocks, so that no part of the country was without its increase. Upon the same conditions of faith and obedience, do Christians hold those spiritual and eternal good things, of which the pleasant fields and fertile hills of Canaan were sacramental. Christ is the "bread" of life, he is the "rock" of salvation, and his promises are as "honey" to pious minds. But they who reject him, as their Lord and Master, must also lose him as their Saviour and their reward.

SIXTEENTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM LXXXII.

ARGUMENT.

THE Psalmist addresseth himself to judges and magistrates; 1, he remindeth them of the presence of that God whom they represent, and to whom they are accountable; 2—4, he exhorteth them to the due discharge of their office; 5, reproveth the ignorance and corruption among them; 6, 7, threateneth their fall and punishment; 8, prayeth for the manifestation of Messiah, and the establishment of his righteous kingdom.

1. *God standeth in the congregation of the mighty: he judgeth among the gods.*

Earthly judicatories are the appointment of God. All magistrates act in his name, and by virtue of his commission. He is invisibly present in their assemblies, and superintends their proceedings. He receives appeals from their wrongful decisions; he will one day re-hear all causes at his own tribunal, and reverse every iniquitous sentence, before the great congregation of men and angels. Unjust judges must either disbelieve or forget all this. God is, in like manner, present to the heart of each individual; he is privy to the various reasonings and pleadings of grace and nature, of principle and interest, in that lesser court; and he is a witness of its determinations; which also will by him be manifested to the world, and openly canvassed, when he sitteth in judgment.

2. *How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked?* 3. *Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy.* 4. *Deliver the poor and needy: rid* them *out of the hand of the wicked.*

A charge is here given, by the Spirit of God, to all magistrates, much like that which king Jehoshaphat gave to his judges: 2 Chron. xix. 6, 7. "Take heed what ye do; for ye judge not for man, but for the LORD, who is with you in the judgment. Wherefore now, let the fear of the LORD be upon you, take heed, and do it: for there is no iniquity with the LORD our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts." It is the glory of Jehovah and his Christ, to "accept no man's person" in judgment; to regard neither the quality nor the station of the offender: but to give to every man, of whatever rank or degree in the world, according to his works. All the sons of Adam were once "poor and fatherless, needy and afflicted," when God took their cause into his own hands, and, by a method consistent with the strictest justice, "delivered them out of the hand of the wicked one." Every oppressor of the poor is a likeness of "that wicked one," and every upright judge will endeavor to resemble the Redeemer. For this purpose he will be always willing to admit, diligent to discuss, solicitous to expedite, the cause of a poor and injured person, and to afford such an one the speediest, the cheapest, and the most effectual redress, equally contemning the offers of opulence, and the frowns of power. A judge who acts in this manner, takes the readiest way to obtain the favor of God; and the people will be sure to bless him.

5. *They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth,* or, *the land, are out of course;* or, *nod,* or, *shake.*

We here find the prophet deploring, in

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magistrates, a method of proceeding contrary to that above described. He laments their voluntary ignorance in the ways of righteousness, and their choosing to "walk in darkness." In judges this is occasioned by "presents and gifts," which, as saith the son of Sirach, "blind the eyes of the wise:" Ecclus. xx. 29. And if once the "pillars" and "foundations" are moved from their integrity, and "shaken" to and fro by every blast of fear and favor, what shall become of the political fabric erected upon them? Verily it must fall; and great and terrible will be the fall thereof. A community, whether ecclesiastical or civil, consisteth of great numbers; but its well-being dependeth on a few, in whose hands the administration is placed. When the salt hath lost its savor, the mass must putrefy; when the light becometh darkness, how great must be that darkness!

6. *I have said, Ye* are *gods, and all of you* are *children of the Most High.* 7. *But ye shall die like men,* or, *Adam, and fall like one of the princes.*

It is true, then, that magistrates are exalted above other men; that they are dignified with a commission from above; appointed to be the vicegerents of heaven upon earth; and therefore called by the name of him in whose name they act. But it is likewise as true, that, notwithstanding all this honor conferred upon them, for the good of others, and of themselves, if they use it aright, they still continue to be the mortal sons of mortal "Adam;" like him, they must fall and perish; God can, at any time, cast them down from their high estate, as he did the Heathen "princes" who misbehaved themselves, and opposed his counsels: death certainly will strip them of all their authority, and lay them low in the grave; from thence the last trumpet shall call them forth, to stand, with the rest of their brethren, before the judgment-seat of Christ, there to take their trial, and receive their everlasting sentence. How necessary oftentimes is this consideration, to check the spirit of tyranny and injustice, to qualify the pride and insolence of office!

8. *Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations.*

A view of that disorder and confusion in which frequently the Jewish nation, as well as the rest of the world, was involved, caused the prophets most earnestly to wish and pray for the coming of that time when "God" should "arise," in the person of Messiah, to visit and "judge the earth;" to deliver it from the powers of darkness, and the tyranny of sin; to "inherit all nations," as purchased and redeemed by him; to establish his church among them; and to rule with a sceptre of righteousness, in the hearts of his people. "Arise" yet once again, O Lord Jesu, from thy throne, where thou sittest at the right hand of the Father; "judge the earth," again corrupted and overwhelmed with iniquity; do away sin, and put an end for ever to the power of Satan; "inherit all nations," redeemed from death, and ransomed from the grave; and reign to eternity, King of Righteousness, Peace, and Glory.

PSALM LXXXIII.

ARGUMENT.

In this Psalm the church, 1—8, complaineth to God of the insolence, subtilty, rage, and malice of her enemies, united in close confederacy against her; 9—12, she prayeth for a manifestation of that power which formerly discomfited Jabin, Sisera and the Midianites; that so the hostile nations, 13—15, made sensible of the superiority of Israel's God, 16—18, might either themselves be induced to acknowledge him, or else, by their destruction, become a warning and admonition to others. As, while the world endureth, there will be a church, and while there is a church she will have her enemies, who are to increase upon her as the end approacheth, this Psalm can never be out of date. And to the spiritual adversaries of his soul, every private Christian may apply it at all times.

1. *Keep not thou silence, O God; hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God.* 2. *For, lo, thine enemies make a tumult; and they that hate thee have lifted up their head.*

The church entreateth God again and again to hear and help her in the day of trouble. Her enemies and haters are here said to be the enemies and haters of God, because Christ and the church, like man and wife, are one; they have one common interest; they have the same friends and the same foes. To him, therefore, she applieth, terrified by the tumultuous noise of confederated nations, roaring against her like the roaring of the sea, and "lifting up their heads," as so many monsters of the deep, to devour her at once. When temptations are urgent upon the soul, and the passions rise in arms against her peace and innocence, then do "the enemies of God make a tumult, and they that hate him lift up their heads;" and then is the time for her to be instant in prayer.

3. *They have taken crafty counsel against*

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thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones. 4. *They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from* being *a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.*

The combination, so much dreaded, is described as having been formed upon the best principles of secular policy, with much subtilty, and the most determinate malice, against the "people" of God, and his "hidden ones," that is, his peculiar nation, separated from the world, and taken under the cover and protection of his wings. To root up the plantations of paradise, to extirpate the holy seed, to extinguish the very "name of Israel," was the scheme intended by these associated adversaries of Sion. Such are our spiritual enemies; such is their cunning, their rage, and their resolution: what prudence, what vigilance, what courage, are necessary, that we may oppose them with success!

5. *For they have consulted together with one consent; they are confederate against thee.*

When Christ was about to be crucified, it is observed by St. Luke, that "the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together; for before they were at enmity between themselves:" Luke, xxiii. 12. And however the enemies of the church may quarrel with one another, when they have nothing else to do, yet if a favorable opportunity offer itself for making an attack upon her, they lay aside their differences, and unite as one man; by no means refusing the friendly aid even of infidels and atheists, who are always ready to join in carrying on the war against the common adversary.

6. *The tabernacles of Edom, and the Ishmaelites; of Moab, and the Hagarenes;* 7. *Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek; the Philistines, with the inhabitants of Tyre:* 8. *Assur also is joined with them; they have holpen the children of Lot.*

These are the names of the confederates. The Edomites were descended from Esau, that old original enemy of Jacob; the Ishmaelites from Ishmael, the son of the bond-woman, and sworn foe to Isaac, heir of the promises; the Moabites sprang from Moab, one of the incestuous children of Lot; the Hagerenes were other descendants of Hagar; who the Gebalites were is uncertain; the Ammonites came from Ammon, the son of Lot, and incestuous brother of Moab; the Amalekites were the progeny of Amalek, the grandson of Esau; Gen. xxvi. 16: the Philistines and Tyrians are well known; and to complete all, Assur, or the power of Assyria, was called in by the children of Lot, the Moabites and Ammonites, to assist in the great work of exterminating Israel from the face of the earth. These were the ten nations banded together, by a solemn league and covenant, against the people of God. And as Israel was the grand figure of the Christian church, which is now "the Israel of God," so her enemies are often represented by the above recited nations, and in prophetical language are called by their names. Every age has its Edomites, and its Ishmaelites, &c. &c. The actors are changed, and the scenes are shifted; but the stage and the drama continue the same.

9. *Do unto them as* unto *the Midianites; as* to *Sisera, as* to *Jabin, at the brook of Kison:* 10. Which *perished at Endor: they became* as *dung for the earth.* 11. *Make their nobles like Oreb and Zeeb: yea, all their princes as Zeba and as Zalmunna:* 12. *Who said, Let us take to ourselves the houses of God in possession.*

The church, having recounted the enemies which compassed her about on every side, looks up for succor to that Almighty power which had of old so graciously interposed on her behalf and rescued her from her persecutors, in the days of Deborah, Barak, and Gideon: see Judg. iv. viii. Fully sensible that those deliverances were wrought by the immediate hand of Jehovah, she offers the prayer of faith for a like manifestation of his glory, and a like victory over those who intended, in the same manner, to seize and devour his inheritance, Of how great use and comfort are the Old Testament histories to us, in all our afflictions!

13. *O my God, make them like a wheel;* or, *like thistle-down; as the stubble before the wind.* 14. *As the fire burneth a wood, and as the flame setteth the mountains on fire;* 15. *So persecute,* or, *thou shalt pursue, them with thy tempest, and make,* or, *thou shalt make, them afraid with thy storm.*

The fate of those is here predicted, who invade the inheritance of Jehovah, and say, "Let us take to ourselves the houses of God in possession." The inconstancy and mutability of their fortunes is resembled to "thistle-down," or some such light revolving body, and to "stubble" or chaff, whirled about and dissipated by the "wind:" the suddenness, horror, and universality of their destruction are set forth by the similitude of a "fire" consuming the dry trees in a "forest," or some combustible matter on the "mountains." Such is the storm and tempest of God's indignation, which pursues and terrifies the sacrilegious and ungodly.

16. *Fill their faces with shame; that they may seek thy name, O Lord.* 17. *Let them,* or, *they shall, be confounded and troubled for*

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ever; yea, let them, or, *they shall, be put to shame and perish.* 18. *That* men *may know that thou, whose name alone* is JEHOVAH, art *the Most High over all the earth.*

The punishments inflicted by heaven upon wicked men, are primarily intended to humble and convert them. If they continue incorrigible under every dispensation of merciful severity, they are at last cut off, and finally destroyed; that others, admonished by their example, may repent, and return, and give glory to God. Salutary are the afflictions which bring men, and happy the men who are brought by them, to an acknowledgment of "JEHOVAH our Righteousness," our exalted and glorified Redeemer, "the Most High over all the earth;" whom all must acknowledge, and before whom all must appear to be judged, in the great and terrible day.

PSALM LXXXIV.

ARGUMENT.

THIS Psalm, for the subject-matter of it, bears a resemblance to the xliid. Under the figure of an Israelite, deprived of all access to Jerusalem and the sanctuary (whether it were David when driven away by Absalom, or any other person in like circumstances at a different time,) we are presented with 1, 2, the earnest longing of a devout soul after the house and presence of God; 3—7, a beautiful and passionate eulogy on the blessedness of his ministers and servants; 8—10, a fervent prayer for participation of that blessedness; and, 11, 12, an act of faith in his power and goodness, which render him both able and willing to grant requests of this nature.

1. *How amiable* are *thy tabernacles, O* LORD *of hosts!*

Thus ardently doth a banished Israelite express his love for Sion, his admiration of the beauty of holiness. Nay, Balaam himself, when from the top of Peor he saw the children of Israel abiding in their tents, with the Glory in the midst of them, could not help exclaiming, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!" Numb. xxiv. 5. "How amiable," then, may the Christian say, are those eternal mansions, from whence sin and sorrow are excluded; how goodly that camp of the saints, and that beloved city, where righteousness and joy reign triumphant, and peace and unity are violated no more; where thou, O blessed Jesu, "Lord of hosts," King of men and angels, dwellest in glorious majesty, constituting by thy presence the felicity of thy chosen!

2. *My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the* LORD: *my heart and my flesh crieth out,* or, *shouteth, for the living God.*

It is said of the queen of Sheba, that upon beholding the pleasantness of Jerusalem, the splendor of Solomon's court, and, above all, the magnificence of the temple, with the services therein performed, "there was no more spirit in her:" 1 Kings, x. 5. What wonder, therefore, if the soul should be affected, even to sickness and fainting, while, from this land of her captivity, she beholdeth, by faith, the heavenly Jerusalem, the city and court of the great King, with all the transporting glories of the church triumphant: while, in her meditations, she draweth the comparison between her wretched state of exile upon earth, and the unspeakable blessedness of being delivered from temptation and affliction, and admitted into the everlasting "courts of Jehovah?" Whose "heart and flesh" doth not exult, and "shout" aloud for joy, at a prospect of rising from the bed of death, to dwell with "the living God;" to see the face of him, "in whom is life, and the life is the light of men?" John, i. 4. Did the Israelites, from all parts of Judea, go up, with the voice of jubilee, to keep a feast at Jerusalem; and shall Christians grieve, when the time is come for them to ascend, and to celebrate an eternal festival in heaven?

3. *Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow,* or, *ringdove, a nest for herself, where she may lay her young,* even *thine altars, O* LORD *of hosts, my King and my God.*

The Psalmist is generally supposed, in this verse, to lament his unhappiness, in being deprived of all access to the tabernacle, or temple, a privilege enjoyed even by the birds, who were allowed to build their nests in the neighborhood of the sanctuary. It is evidently the design of this passage to intimate to us, that in the house, and at the altar of God, a faithful soul findeth freedom from care and sorrow, quiet of mind, and gladness of spirit; like a bird, that has secured a little mansion, for the reception and education of her young. And there is no heart, endued with sensibility, which doth not bear its testimony to the exquisite beauty and propriety of this affecting image.

4. *Blessed* are *they that dwell in thy house: they will be,* or, *are, still praising thee.*

Here the metaphor is dropped, and the former sentiment expressed in plain language, "Blessed are," not the mighty and opulent of the earth, but "they that dwell in thy house," the ministers of the eternal temple in heaven, the angels and the spirits of just men made perfect; their every passion is resolved into love, every duty into praise; hal-

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lelujah succeeds hallelujah; "they are still," still for ever, "praising thee." And blessed, next to them, are those ministers and members of the church here below, who, in disposition, as well as employment, do most resemble them.

5. *Blessed* is *the man whose strength* is *in thee: in whose heart* are *the ways of* them; Heb. *the ways are in the heart of them.*

Not only they are pronounced blessed who "dwell" in the temple, but all they also who are "travelling" thitherward (as the whole Jewish nation was wont to do three times in a year,) and who are therefore meditating on their "journey," and on the "way" which leadeth to the holy city, trusting in God to "strengthen," and prosper, and conduct them to the house of his habitation, the place where his glory dwelleth. Such a company of sojourners are Christians, going up to the heavenly Jerusalem; such ought to be their trust in God, and such the subject of their thoughts.*

6. Who, *passing through the valley of Baca, make it a well: the rain also filleth the pools.* 7. *They go from strength to strength,* every one of them *in Zion appeareth before God;* or, *the God of gods appeareth,* i. e. to them *in Zion.*

After numberless uncertain conjectures offered by commentators upon the construction of these two verses, it seemeth impossible for us to attain to any other than a general idea of their true import; which is this, that the Israelites, or some of them, passed, in their way to Jerusalem, through a valley that had the name of "Baca," a noun derived from a verb which signifies to "weep;" that in this valley they were refreshed by plenty of water; that with renewed vigor they proceeded from stage to stage, until they presented themselves before God in Zion. The present world is to us this valley of weeping; in our passage through it, we are refreshed by the streams of divine grace, flowing down from the great fountain of consolation; and thus are we enabled to proceed from one degree of holiness to another, until we come to the glorified vision of God in heaven itself.

* In ejus animo versantur semitæ ferentes ad templum quo properat. Morali sensu; quicunque sanctus est, quotidie in priora extenditur, et præteritorum obliviscitur, cum Paulo, Phil. iii. 13: Bossuet. Jerusalem is represented in the New Testament as a type of heaven. I see nothing irrational, therefore, in supposing, that the inspired writer, in describing the ascent to Jerusalem, might have in view also that spiritual progress, leading to the city which is above, the mother of us all. The words before us are certainly very applicable to the advances made, in this progress, from strength to strength, from one stage of Christian perfection to another. Merrick.

Mr. Merrick's poetical version of this passage is extremely beautiful, and applies at once to the case of the Israelite, and to that of the Christian:

> Blest, who, their strength on thee reclin'd,
> Thy seat explore with constant mind,
> And, Salem's distant tow'rs in view,
> With active zeal their way pursue:
> Secure the thirsty vale they tread,
> While, call'd from out their sandy bed
> (As down in grateful show'rs distill'd
> The heav'ns their kindliest moisture yield,)
> The copious springs their steps beguile,
> And bid the cheerless desert smile.
> From stage to stage advancing still,
> Behold them reach fair Sion's hill,
> And prostrate at her hallow'd shrine,
> Adore the Majesty divine.

8. *O* Lord *God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob.* 9. *Behold, O God, our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed.*

After extolling the happiness of those who dwelt in the temple, and of those who had access to it, the Psalmist breaks forth into a most ardent prayer to his God, for a share in that happiness. He addresseth him as "the Lord of hosts;" Almighty in power; as "the God of Jacob," infinite in mercy and goodness to his people; as their "shield," the object of all their trust for defence and protection; and beseecheth him to "look upon the face of his anointed," that is, of David, if he were king of Israel when this Psalm was written; or rather of Messiah,* in whom God is always well pleased; for whose sake he hath mercy upon us, through whose name and merits our prayers are accepted, and the kingdom of heaven is opened to all believers.

10. *For a day in thy courts* is *better than a thousand: I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.*

One day spent in meditation and devotion, affordeth a pleasure, far, far superior to that which an age of worldly prosperity could give. Happier is the least and lowest of the servants of Jesus, than the greatest and most exalted potentate who knoweth him not. And he is no proper judge of blessedness, who hesitates a moment to prefer the condition of a penitent in the porch, to that of a sinner on the throne. If this be the case upon earth, how much more in heaven? O come that one glorious day, whose sun shall never go down, nor any cloud obscure the lustre of his beams; that day, when the temple of God shall be opened in heaven, and we shall be admitted to serve him for ever therein!

11. *For the* Lord *God is a sun and shield:*

* "Christi tui;" regis, qui Christi figura. Bossuet.

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the LORD *will give grace and glory: no good* thing *will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.*

Jesus Christ is our "Lord," and our "God;" he is a "sun" to enlighten and direct us in the way, and a "shield" to protect us against the enemies of our salvation; he will give "grace" to carry us on "from strength to strength," and "glory" to crown us when we "appear before him in Zion;" he will "withhold" nothing that is "good" and profitable for us in the course of our journey, and will himself be our reward when we come to the end of it.

12. *O* LORD *of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.*

While, therefore, we are strangers and sojourners here below, far from that heavenly country where we would be, in whom should we trust to bring us to the holy city, new Jerusalem, of which the Lord God and the Lamb are the temple, but in thee, O Saviour and Redeemer, who art the Head of every creature, the Captain of the armies of heaven and earth, the Lord of hosts, and the King of glory? "Blessed," thrice "blessed, is the man that trusteth in thee."

PSALM LXXXV.

ARGUMENT.

THIS Psalm, appointed by the church to be used on Christmas-day, 1—3, celebrateth the redemption of the Israel of God from their spiritual captivity under sin and death; 4—7, teacheth us to pray for the full accomplishment of that redemption in ourselves; 8—11, describeth the incarnation of Christ, with the joyful meeting of Mercy and Truth, Righteousness and Peace, at his birth, and 12, 13, the blessed effects of his advent.

1. LORD, *thou hast been favorable unto thy land: thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob.* 2. *Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin.* 3. *Thou hast taken away all thy wrath: thou hast turned* thyself *from the fierceness of thine anger.*

These three verses speak of the deliverance from captivity, as already brought about; whereas, in the subsequent parts of the Psalm, it is prayed for and predicted, as a thing future. To account for this, some suppose that the Psalmist first returns thanks for a temporal redemption, and then prophesies of the spiritual salvation by Messiah. Others are of opinion, that the same eternal redemption is spoken of throughout, but represented, in the beginning of the Psalm, as already accomplished in the divine decree, though the eventual completion was yet to come. The difficulty, perhaps, may be removed, by rendering these first three verses in the present time; "LORD, thou art favorable to thy land, thou bringest back the captivity of thy people," &c. that is, Thou art the God whose property it is to do this, and to show such mercy to thy people, who therefore call upon thee for the same. But, indeed, to us Christians, who now use the Psalm, the difference is not material; since a part of our redemption is past, and a part of it is yet to come, for the hastening of which latter we daily pray. God hath already been exceedingly gracious and "favorable" to the whole "earth," in "bringing back," by the resurrection of Jesus, the spiritual "captivity of" his people; he hath himself, in Christ, "borne," and so taken away, "the iniquity of his people;" he hath "covered all their sins," that they should no more appear in judgment against them: propitiated by the Son of his love, he hath removed his "wrath," and "turned himself from the fierceness of his anger." So exactly and literally do these words describe the means and method of Gospel salvation, that a Christian can hardly affix any other ideas to them.

4. *Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger towards us to cease.* 5. *Wilt thou be angry with us for ever? Wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations?* 6. *Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee?* 7. *Show us thy mercy, O* LORD, *and grant us thy salvation.*

The ancient church is here introduced as petitioning for the continuation and completion of those blessings which had been mentioned in the foregoing verses, namely, that God would "turn" his people from their captivity, and "cause his anger towards them to cease;" that he would "revive" them from sin and sorrow, and give them occasion to "rejoice in him," their mighty deliverer; that he would "show them" openly that "mercy" of which they had so often heard, and "grant them that salvation," or that "Saviour," that JESUS, who had been so long promised to mankind. And although it be true that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, and hath virtually procured all these blessings for the church, yet do "we" still continue to pray, in the same words, for the actual application of them all to ourselves, by the conversion of our hearts, the justification of our persons, the sanctification of our souls, and the glorification of our bodies. For this last blessing of redemption, "the whole creation waiteth, groaning, and travailing in pain together, UNTIL NOW," Rom. viii. 22.

8. *I will hear what God the* LORD *will*

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speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints; but let them not turn again to folly; or, *that they may not turn again to folly.*

The prophet having prayed, in the name of the church, that Jehovah would "show them his mercy, and grant them his salvation," declares himself resolved, concerning this "salvation, to inquire and search diligently, what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in him did signify, when it testified beforehand the coming of Christ, and the glory that should follow;" see 1 Pet. i. 10, he would attend to "what God the LORD should say," and report it to the world. Now, what was the message which the prophets had commission to deliver from God, but that he would "speak peace," or reconciliation through a Saviour, "to his people, and to his saints?" The Gospel is accordingly styled by St. Peter, "the word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ:" Acts, x. 36. And what was the end of this reconciliation between God and men, but that men should become and continue the servants of God; that, being washed from their sins by the blood of Christ, and renewed in their minds by the grace of Christ, they should walk in the paths of wisdom and holiness, and "turn not again to the "folly" they had renounced?

9. *Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him, that glory may dwell in our land.*

God, who "calleth things that be not as though they were," teacheth his prophet to do likewise. The Psalmist therefore speaks with assurance of the "Saviour," as if he then saw him before his eyes, healing, by the word of his power, the bodies and the souls of men upon earth, and manifesting forth his "glory," in human nature, to all such as, with a holy "fear," and filial reverence, believed on him. St. John himself hardly useth plainer language when he saith, "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt, or tabernacled, among us; and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth;" John, i. 14. The body of Christ was the true "tabernacle," or temple; his Divinity was the GLORY which resided there, and filled that holy place. The church is his mystical "body;" by his Spirit he now and ever "dwelleth in our land; and his salvation is always nigh them that fear him, as saith the Holy Virgin in her song, "His mercy is on them that fear him, throughout all generations."

10. *Mercy and truth are met together: righteousness and peace have kissed* each other. 11. *Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven.*

These four divine attributes parted at the fall of Adam, and met again at the birth of Christ. Mercy was ever inclined to save man, and Peace could not be his enemy; but Truth exacted the performance of God's threat, "The soul that sinneth it shall die;" and Righteousness could not but give to every one his due. Jehovah must be true in all his ways, and righteous in all his works. Now there is no religion upon earth, except the Christian, which can satisfy the demands of all these claimants, and restore an union between them; which can show how God's word can be true, and his work just, and the sinner, notwithstanding, find mercy, and obtain peace. Mahomet's prayer, were it the prayer of a righteous man and a prophet, could not satisfy divine justice; the blood of bulls and goats was always insufficient for that purpose, being a figure only for the time then present, which ceased of course when the reality appeared. "Sacrifice and burnt offering thou wouldst not; then, said I, Lo, I come." A God incarnate reconciled all things in heaven and earth. When Christ appeared in our nature, the promise was fulfilled, and "Truth sprang out of the "earth." And now Righteousness, "looking down from heaven," beheld in him every thing that she required; an undefiled birth, a holy life, an innocent death; a spirit and a mouth without guile, a soul and a body without sin. She saw, and was satisfied, and returned to earth. Thus all the four parties met again in perfect harmony; Truth ran to Mercy and embraced her; Righteousness to Peace, and kissed her. And this could happen only at the birth of Jesus, in whom "the tender Mercy of our God visited us, and who is the Truth; who is made unto us Righteousness, and who is our Peace." See Luke, i. 78. John, xiv. 6. 1 Cor. i. 30. Ephes. ii. 14. Those that are thus joined, as attributes, in Christ, ought not, as virtues, to be separated in a Christian, who may learn how to resemble his blessed Lord and Master, by observing that short, but complete, rule of life, comprehended in the following words: Show Mercy, and speak Truth; do Righteousness, and follow Peace. See St. Bernard, in his Sermon on the Annunciation; and, from him, Bishop Andrews on these two verses of our Psalm.*

12. *Yea, the* LORD *shall give* that which is *good: and our land shall yield her increase.*

Unless God vouchsafe a gracious rain from

* Soluta captivitate, felicem populi statum designat, omni bonorum copia et virtutibus florentis; quæ maxime impleta sunt, postquam Christus, ipsa veritas, idemque pax nostra, e terra ortus est. BOSSUET.

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above, the earth cannot "yield her increase." The effects of the incarnation of Christ, the descent of the Spirit, and the publication of the Gospel among men, are frequently set forth in Scripture under images borrowed from that fruitfulness caused in the earth by the rain of heaven. Thus Isaiah: "Drop down ye heavens from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness; let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together, xlv. 8. I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring. And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses. xliv. 3. As the rain cometh down from heaven, and watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud; so shall my word be," &c. lv. 10. Give us evermore, O Lord, "that which is good, that our land may yield her increase;" give us that good gift, the gift of thy Spirit, that we be "neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Pet. i. 8.

13. *Righteousness shall go before him, and shall set* us *in the way of his steps;* or, *and shall set his steps in the way.*

Upon the appearance of the Redeemer, "Righteousness" is represented "as going before him," like his harbinger the Baptist, to prepare and make ready his way. In that way, the way of righteousness, "he set his steps," and walked therein, without the least deviation, until he had finished his appointed course. Draw us, blessed Jesu, and we will run after thee, in the path of life; let thy mercy pardon us, thy truth enlighten us, thy righteousness direct us, to follow thee, O Lamb of God, whithersoever thou goest, through poverty, affliction, persecution, and death itself; that our portion may be for ever in thy kingdom of peace and love.

SEVENTEENTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM LXXXVI.

ARGUMENT.

THIS Psalm is entitled, "A prayer of David," and supposed to have been written in some of his great distresses. Like others of the same kind, it is calculated for the use of the church during her sufferings here below, by which she is conformed to the image of the true David, that man of sorrows. It contains, 1, an earnest supplication, grounded on the poverty, 2, the holiness, faith, 3, importunity, and, 4, the devotion, of the suppliant; and on, 5—7, the goodness, and, 8, power of God, 9, 10, to be one day acknowledged by all nations, at their conversion. After this, follows, 11, a petition for wisdom, strength, and singleness of heart; 12, 13, a thanksgiving for redemption; 14, a complaint of persecution from the wicked; 15, an act of faith; 16, 17, a prayer for help and salvation.

1. *Bow down thine ear, O* LORD, *and hear me: for I* am *poor and needy.*

All prayer is founded on a sense of our wants, and God's ability to supply them. In the sight of his Maker, every sinner is "poor and needy;" and he must become so in his own, that his petitions may be regarded; he must pray, with the humility and importunity of a starving beggar, at the gate of heaven, if he expect the great King "to bow down his ear and hear him." "The prayer of the humble," saith the wise son of Sirach, "pierceth the clouds; and till it come nigh, he will not be comforted: and will not depart till the Most High shall behold:" Ecclus. xxxv. 17. The blessed Jesus, "though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, and had not where to lay his head;" nor is it to be doubted, but that, in his state of humiliation, he oftentimes made his prayer to the Father in these very words; "Bow down thine ear, O LORD, and hear me; for I am poor and needy." If he sued in such a form of words for us, shall we think of suing in any other form for ourselves?

2. *Preserve thou my soul, for I* am *holy; O thou my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee.*

The word here translated "holy," is, חסיד, the same which is used in the xvith Psalm; "Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." And indeed, if we understand "holiness" in its strict sense, no one but "he whom the Father sanctified, and sent into the world," to redeem lost man, could say to him, "Preserve my soul, for I am holy." But the word properly signifies, "good, merciful, pious, devoted to the service of God," &c. The Christian, therefore, only pleads, in this expression, his relation to Christ, as being a member of Christ's body, the church, and a partaker of the gifts, which, by virtue of that membership, he has received through the Spirit of holiness. So that this first part of the verse, "Preserve my soul, for I am holy," when repeated by us, is equivalent to another passage in the Psalms, "I am THINE, O save me:" cxix. 94. The latter member of the verse under consideration teaches us to pray for help and salvation, as the "servants" of God, whose eyes therefore look naturally to him, "as the eyes of servants," in affliction,

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"look unto the hand of their masters:" Psal. cxxiii. 2. And happy, surely, are we in a Master, who himself, for our salvation, once lived, and prayed, and suffered, and died, in "the form of a servant." Phil. ii. 7.

3. *Be merciful unto me,* LORD, *for I cry unto thee daily.*

There is no man upon the earth, but needeth "mercy;" he who is truly sensible of his need, will "cry daily" for it; and he who doth so, may comfort himself with the hope of obtaining it. The prayers of Jesus, poured forth for the salvation of his mystical body, in the days of his flesh, were frequent and mighty; his intercession for us in heaven is continual. Does the man believe this, who prays not at all, or who prays without devotion?

4. *Rejoice the soul of thy servant; for unto thee, O* LORD, *do I lift up my soul.*

Sorrow was the portion of Christ in this world, and the church hath no reason to expect any other from it. He that would have real "joy" in his heart, must beseech God to give it him, for no creature hath it to give. Nay, the love of the world must be renounced, before this divine gift can even be "received." The affections must be loosened from earth, and "lifted up" to heaven, on the wings of faith and love; for in the soul that is full of sensual pleasures and indulgence, there is neither room nor taste for spiritual delights.

5. *For thou,* LORD, *art good, and ready to forgive: and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.*

We are encouraged to "lift up our souls to God" in prayer, because his "goodness," and the "plenteousness of his mercy" in Christ Jesus, incline him to give his holy Spirit of peace and comfort to "all that call upon him." His favor is no longer confined to Judea; there is now no distinction of age, condition, or country: but the sinner, whoever or wherever he be, if he call upon the saving name of Jesus, is heard, pardoned, and accepted, upon the terms of the evangelical covenant.

6. *Give ear, O* LORD, *unto my prayer; and attend to the voice of my supplications.* 7. *In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee; for thou wilt answer me.*

In confidence of an "answer," nourished and strengthened by all the foregoing considerations, the suppliant renews his prayer, while "the day of trouble" lasts; and that day will not end, but with this mortal pilgrimage; since he who loves his country, will ever be uneasy while he is detained among strangers and enemies, perils and temptations. But the trouble is overpaid with profit, which rendereth us adepts in the practice of devotion, which convinceth us that we are abroad, and maketh us to wish and sigh for our true and only home.

8. *Among the gods* there is *none like unto thee, O* LORD; *neither* are there any works *like unto thy works.*

Another reason why application should be made to Jehovah, is his infinite superiority over all those that, by infatuated men, were ever called "gods." From the ancient idolatry, which taught adoration to the sun, moon, and stars, to the light and the air, we have been delivered by the Gospel; nor do we any longer profess to worship Jupiter and the other Heathen gods and goddesses. But do not many still trust in idols, and have they not, in effect, other objects of worship, from whose hands they expect their reward? Are not the hearts of the covetous, the ambitious, the voluptuous so many temples of Mammon or Plutus, of Jupiter or Mars, of Bacchus, Comus, and Venus? But what are these deities; what is their power; and what are their gifts? What is the whole world, and all that is therein, when compared with its Maker and Redeemer; what is it, when applied to, for the ease and comfort of a wounded spirit?—"Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O LORD; neither are there any works like unto thy works?"

9. *All nations whom thou hast made, shall come and worship before thee, O* LORD; *and shall glorify thy name.*

The psalmist predicteth that this superiority of Jehovah should one day be acknowledged throughout all the earth, when "neither in Jerusalem only, nor in the mount of the Samaritans," but in every place, "should men worship the Father;" John, iv. 21. when he who "made all nations" by his Son, should by that Son redeem all nations, bringing them from the world to the church, there to "worship before" the true God and "in songs of praise to glorify his holy name." If in these our times, we behold the nations again falling away from God, departing from the purity of their faith and leaving their first love, let us comfort ourselves with looking forward to that scene of things described by St. John, in which we hope to bear a part hereafter: "I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice saying, salvation unto our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." Rev. vii. 9.

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10. *For thou* art *great, and doest wondrous things: thou* art *God alone.*

"Great" is Jehovah in his power, in his wisdom, in his mercy; "wonderful" in the creation of the world, wonderful in the preservation and the government of it, wonderful in its redemption; wonderful in the incarnation, life, death, ressurection, and ascension of Jesus, in the descent of the Spirit, the propagation of the Gospel, the sufferings of saints, and the conversion of sinners; most wonderful will he be, when he shall raise the dead, judge the world, condemn the wicked, and glorify the righteous. And then shall every tongue confess "Thou art God alone!"

11. *Teach me thy way, O* LORD; *I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name.*

It is the continual subject of the Mediator's intercession above, and of our prayers below, that we may be "taught the way of Jehovah," the way to life eternal, prepared for us, through faith and love which is in Christ Jesus; that being so taught, we may likewise be enabled "to walk in the truth," without error in doctrine, or deviation from duty; believing all things which God hath revealed, and doing whatsoever he hath commanded us; that the affections of the "heart" may be withdrawn from other objects, and being no longer divided between God and the world, become "united" in the filial "fear of his name," as the grand principle of action.

12. *I will praise thee, O* LORD *my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore.* 13. *For great* is *thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.*

Gratitude for mercies already received, will obtain a continuance and increase of those mercies. The church is never in so afflicted a state, but she hath still reason to intermingle hallelujahs with her hosannas, and, in the midst of her most fervent prayers to "praise the LORD her God with all her heart, and to glorify his name for evermore;" since, whatever she may suffer upon earth (and even those sufferings will turn to her advantage,) "great," most undoubtedly, "hath his mercy been toward her, in delivering" her, by the resurrection of Jesus, from the bondage of sin, the dominion of death, and the bottomless pit of "hell"

14. *O God, the proud are risen against me, and the assemblies of violent* men *have sought after my soul,; and have not set thee before their eyes.*

From praises we return again to prayers. When Christ was upon earth, we know the treatment he met with from "proud and violent men, who had not set God before their eyes;" from self-righteous Jews, and conceited Gentiles, who rose up, and took counsel together, against him. What his church afterwards suffered at the hands of the same enemies, is likewise well known. How much more she is to undergo in the latter days, we know not as yet; but this we do know, that the spirit of the world stands, now and ever, in opposition to the Spirit of God; its design is always the same, although its methods of working be divers. Nor can we be ignorant of those domestic adversaries, that assembly of haughty and turbulent passions, which are continually making insurrections, and destroying the peace of the soul. So that either from without, or from within, every one, who is a Christian in deed, shall be sure to have his portion of tribulation.

15. *But thou, O* LORD, art *a God full of compassion, and gracious; long suffering, and plenteous in goodness and truth.*

Having taken a view of those that are against us, it is now time to look up to those that are with us. And can we have better friends, than all these gracious and favorable attributes of heaven? Can more comfortable and joyful tidings be brought us, than that God loveth us with a father's love; that he is ready to pardon, slow to anger; and that we have his truth pledged for the performance of his mercy? What a fountain of consolation is here opened for the afflicted Christian! "Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more." Prov. xxxi. 7.

16. *O turn unto me, and have mercy upon me; give thy strength unto thy servant, and save the son of thine handmaid.*

On the consideration of the above-mentioned attributes, a petition is in this verse put up to God, that he would "turn" his face towards us; that he would of his "mercy" pardon us, by his grace "strengthen" us, and by his power "save" us from all our adversaries. Every Christian is the "servant" of God, and "the son of his handmaid," the church; which may say, in the same spirit of humility and obedience with the blessed Virgin, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord."

17. *Show me a token for good, that they which hate me may see* it, *and be ashamed; because thou,* LORD, *hast holpen me, and comforted me.*

Many outward signs and "tokens" of the divine favor were in old time vouchsafed to patriarchs, prophets, and kings of Israel. The law itself was a collection of external and sacramental figures of grace and mercy. All these centred and had their accomplishment in that grand and everlasting sign and token of God's love to man, the incarnation

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of Christ, which all faithful people from the beginning wished and prayed for. On this sign, the Christian looks with joy, as the great proof that God has "holpen him and comforted him;" while his faith in it doth not fail, he hath the witness in himself, and his actions declare as much to all around him; "that they which hate him may be ashamed" and converted, before that day come, when shame shall be fruitless, and conversion impossible.

PSALM LXXXVII.

ARGUMENT.

THE prophet, 1—3, celebrates the stability and felicity of Sion; 4, 5, foretells the accession of the Gentiles to her, and 6, their enrolment among her citizens; 7, extols her as the fountain of grace and salvation. The Psalm was probably penned, on a survey of the city of David, just after the buildings of it were finished.

1. *His foundation is in the holy mountains:* or, *It is his*, i. e. *God's, foundation in the mountains of holiness!** 2. *The* LORD *loveth the gates of Sion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.*

The Psalmist, after having meditated on the strength, the beauty, and the glory of Jerusalem, being smitten with the love of the holy city, and imagining the thoughts of his hearers, or readers, to have been employed on the same subject, breaks forth at once in this abrupt manner, "It is HIS foundation on the holy mountains." By "the holy mountains" are meant those hills of Judea, which Jehovah had chosen, and separated to himself from all others, whereon to construct the highly favored city and temple. As the dwellings of Jacob, in the promised land, were beloved by him more than the dwellings of other nations, so he "loved the gates of Sion, more than all the dwellings of Jacob." Jerusalem was exalted and fortified by its situation; but much more so by the protection of the Almighty. What Jerusalem was, the Christian church is; "built" by God "on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:" Ephes. ii. 20. It is "HIS foundation in the holy mountains;" she is beloved of God above the kingdoms and empires of the earth, which rise and fall only to fulfil the divine counsels concerning her. When those counsels shall be fulfilled, in the salvation of all believers, the world, which subsists only for their sake, will be at an end.

3. *Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God.*

As the prophet began, in a rapture, to speak of the holy city, so now, in fresh transport, he changes the person, and suddenly addresses himself to it. The old Jerusalem was "the city of God, and glorious things were therefore said of it" by the Spirit. Pleasant for situation, and magnificent in its buildings, it was the delight of nations, the joy of the whole earth; there was the royal residence of the kings of Judah; there was the temple, and the ark, and the glory, and the King of heaven dwelling in the midst of her; her streets were honored with the footsteps of the Redeemer of men; there he preached, and wrought his miracles, lived, died, and rose again; thither he sent down the Spirit, and there he first laid the foundations of his church. To know what "glorious things" are said of the NEW Jerusalem, the reader must peruse Isa. lx. and Rev. xxi. xxii.

4. *I will make mention of Rahab,* or, *Egypt, and Babylon, to them that know me; Behold, Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia,* or, *Arabia, this* man *was born there.* 5. *And of Sion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her; and the Highest himself shall establish her.*

The accession of the nations to the church is generally supposed to be here predicted. God declares by his prophet, "I will make mention of," or "cause to be remembered Egypt and Babylon," the old enemies of Israel, "to" or "among them that know me," that is, in the number of my worshippers; "Behold" also "Philistia, and Tyre, with Arabia;" these are become mine; "this," or each of these, "is born there," i. e. in the city of God; they are become children of God, and citizens of Sion; so that "of Sion," or the church, "it shall be said, This and that man," Heb. "a man and a man,"* i. e. great numbers of men in succession, "are born in

* Some commentators suppose this verse to be a part of the title, which will then run thus, "For the sons of Korah, a Psalm; a song, when he laid the foundation on the holy mountains."

* Dr Durell renders אישׁ ואישׁ, "The man, even the man," that is, "The man of men; or, "The greatest of all men." The reduplication, he thinks, according to the oriental phraseology, must mean the superlative, or highest degree. He adds—According to this interpretation, every one will see who this eminent personage was to be, from whose birth Zion (used by a synecdoche for Judea) was to acquire so much glory. The latter hemistic—"And the Highest himself shall establish her"—seems to me to have reference, not to God the Father, but to his Son; it appearing to be exegetical of the preceding one, and to describe his Divine, as the other does his human nature. CRITICAL REMARKS, p. 167.

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her;" alluding to the multitudes of converts under the Gospel, the sons of that Jerusalem, "which is the mother of us all;" Gal. iv. 26, "and the Highest himself shall establish her;" as he saith, "Upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Matt. xvi. 18.

6. *The* LORD *shall count when he writeth up the people*, that *this* man *was born there.*

In the book of life, that register of heaven, kept by God himself, our names are entered, not as born of flesh and blood by the will of man, but as born of water and the Spirit by the will of God; of each person it is written, "that he was born there," in the church and city of God. That is the only birth which we ought to value ourselves upon, because that alone gives us our title to "the inheritance of the saints in light. In Jesus Christ there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision, nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian," noble nor ignoble, "bond nor free; but Christ is all, and in all." Col. iii. 11.*

7. *As well the singers as the players on instruments* shall be there; *all my springs* are *in thee.*

The literal version of the words, as Dr. Chandler observes, seems to be—"Cantantes erunt, sicut choream ducentes: omnes fontes mei in te." "They shall sing like those that lead up the dance," i. e. most joyfully; singing and dancing frequently accompanying one another. And the burthen of the song thus joyfully sung in praise of Sion, was to be this, "All my springs," or fountains, "are in thee." And if such be indeed the incomparable excellence of the church, and such the benefits of her communion, as they have been set forth in the foregoing verses, what anthem better deserves to be performed by all her choirs? In thee, O Sion, is the fountain of salvation, and from thee are derived all those springs of grace, which flow, by the divine appointment, while the world lasts, for the purification and refreshment of mankind upon earth.

PSALM LXXXVIII.

ARGUMENT.

THIS Psalm, as Mr. Mudge observes, may well be said to be composed, according to its title, לְעַנּוֹת, to create dejection, to raise a pensive gloom or melancholy in the mind; the whole subject of it being quite throughout heavy, and full of the most dismal complaints. The nature and degree of the sufferings related in it; the strength of the expressions used to describe them; the consent of ancient expositors; the appointment of the Psalm by the church to be read on Good Friday; all these circumstances concur in directing an application of the whole to our blessed Lord. His unexampled sorrows, both in body and soul; his desertion in the day of trouble; his bitter passion, and approaching death; with his frequent and fervent prayers for the accomplishment of the promises, for the salvation of the church through him, and for the manifestation of God's glory; these are the particulars treated of in this instructive and most affecting composition.*

1. *O* LORD *God of my salvation, I have cried day* and *night before thee: 2. Let my prayer come before thee: incline thine ear unto my cry.*

We hear in these words the voice of our suffering Redeemer. As man, he addresseth himself to his Father, "the LORD God of his salvation," from whom he expected, according to the promises, a joyful and triumphant resurrection: he pleadeth the fervency and importunity of his prayers, offered up continually, "day and night," during the time of his humiliation and sufferings; and he entreateth to be heard in these his supplications for his body mystical, as well as his body natural; for himself, and for us all.

3. *For my soul is full of troubles; and my life draweth nigh unto the grave.*

Is not this exactly parallel to what he said in the garden, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death? Full," indeed, "of troubles" was thy "soul," O blessed Jesus, in that dreadful hour, when, under the united weight of our sins and sorrows, thou wert sinking into "the grave," in order to raise us out of it. Let us judge of thy love by thy sufferings, and of both by the impossibility of our fully comprehending either.

4. *I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man* that hath *no strength.*

Next to the troubles of Christ's soul, are mentioned the disgrace and ignomy to which he submitted. He who was the fountain of immortality, he from whom no one could take his life, who could in a moment have commanded twelve legions of angels to his aid, or have caused heaven and earth, at a

* Dr. Durell thinks this verse relates to the pedigree of our Lord, recorded among the Jews, and given us by the evangelists—"The Lord will have this recorded, in "registering the people, that HE," the זֶה אִישׁ mentioned above, "was born there."

* Cum Psalmis xxii et lxix ad omnia convenit Psalmus lxxxviii, quod argumento est, eum eodem modo a nobis esse explicandum. Continet igitur pariter orationem Christi ad Patrem e cruce fusam. Auctor hujus Cantici non alium in finem illi titulum dedit מַשְׂכִּיל, "erudientis," quam ut Ecclesia posteriorum temporum ex eo disceret ultima hæc Messiæ fata. VITRINGA, Observat. Sacr. lib. ii. cap. 9.

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word speaking, to fly away before him. he was "counted with them that go down into the pit;" he died, to all appearance. like the rest of mankind; nay, he was forcibly put to death, as a malefactor; and seemed, in the hands of his executioners, "as a man that had no strength," no power or might, to help and to save himself. "His strength went from him; he became weak, and like another man." The people shook their heads at him, saying, "He saved others, himself he cannot save."

5. *Free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more; and they are cut off from thy hand.*

"Free among the dead;" that is, set at liberty, or dismissed from the world, and separated from all communication with its affairs, as dead bodies are; "like" other "corpses that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more," i. e. as living objects of providence upon earth: in this sense, "they are cut off from God's hand," which held and supported them in life. And in no other sense can these expressions be understood; since to imagine that the Psalmist, who so often speaks in plain terms of the resurrection, should here, when personating Messiah, deny that doctrine, would be a conceit equally absurd and impious.

6. *Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps.* 7. *Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted* me *with all thy waves.*

The sufferings of Jesus are represented by his being plunged into a dark and horrible abyss, with the indignation of God, due to our sins, resting upon him, and all the waves of affliction rolling over him. The same image is used in Psal. lxix, and many other places.

8. *Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me: thou hast made me an abomination unto them: I* am *shut up, and I cannot come forth.*

At the apprehension of Christ, "All his disciples forsook him and fled:" Matt. xxvi. 56. Peter denied and abjured his Master, as if his acquaintance had been a disgrace, and "an abomination:" at the crucifixion, it is observed by St. Luke, that, "all his acquaintance stood afar off, beholding these things;" xxiii. 49, beholding the innocent victim envisioned by his enemies, and at length "shut up" in the sepulchre. The day must come, when each person, who reads this, shall be forsaken by the whole world; when relations, friends, and acquaintance shall retire, unable to afford him any help and assistance; when he must die, and be confined in the prison of the grave, no more to "come forth," until that great Easter of the world, the general resurrection. In the solitary and awful hour of our departure hence, let us remember to think on the desertion, the death, the burial, and the resurrection of our Redeemer.

9. *Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction:* LORD, *I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched out my hands unto thee.*

This verse contains a reiteration of the complaint and prayer made at the beginning of the Psalm. These are some of the "strong cryings with tears," which, during the course of his intercessions for us upon earth, the Son of God poured forth "in the days of his flesh." Heb. v. 7.

10. *Wilt thou show wonders to the dead? shall the dead rise* and *praise thee?* 11. *Shall thy loving kindness be declared in the grave,* or *thy faithfulness in destruction?* 12. *Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?*

It hath been sometimes thought, that these verses imply a denial, or at least a doubt of the resurrection from the dead: whereas they contain, in reality, the most powerful plea that Christ himself, in his prayers to the Father, could urge for it; namely, that, otherwise, man would be deprived of his salvation, and God of the glory thence accruing. "Wilt thou show wonders to the dead," while they continue in that state; or if thou shouldest, will they be sensible of those wonders, and make thee due returns of thankfulness? "Shall the dead rise up" in the congregation, "and praise thee?" Must they not live again to do that? "Shall thy loving kindness" to the sons of Adam, in me their Redeemer, be "declared," shall the Gospel be preached, "in the grave?" "or thy faithfulness," in accomplishing the promises concerning this loving kindness, shall it be manifested "in that destruction" wrought by death upon the bodies of men? "Shall thy wonders," the wonders of light, and life, and salvation, "be known in the dark" tomb? "and thy righteousness," which characterizes all thy dispensations, shall it be remembered and proclaimed "in the land" of silence and "forgetfulness?" A Christian, upon the bed of sickness, may undoubtedly plead with God in this manner, for a longer continuance of life, to glorify him here upon earth. But every respite of that kind can be only temporary. All men, sooner or later, must die; and then they can never more experience, the mercies, or sing the praises of God, unless they rise again. So that if the argument hold in one case, it certainly holdeth still stronger in the other.

13. *But unto thee have I cried, O* LORD,

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and in the morning shall my prayer prevent me. 14. LORD, *why castest thou off my soul?* why *hidest thou thou thy face from me?*

Since therefore the wonders, the loving kindness, the faithfulness, and the righteousness of God cannot be manifested by man's redemption, if Messiah be left under the dominion of death, he redoubles his prayers for the promised deliverance; and speaks of his redemption in the hour of sorrow, as in Psal. xxii. 1. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" &c.

15. *I am afflicted and ready to die from* my *youth up:* while *I suffer thy terrors, I am distracted;* Heb. *I am distressed, not knowing which way to turn myself.** 16. *Thy fierce wrath goeth over me, thy terrors have cut me off.* 17. *They came round about me daily like water; they compassed me about together.*

We are not to imagine that the holy Jesus suffered for us only at Gethsemane, and on Mount Calvary. His whole life was one continued passion; a scene of labor and sorrow, of contradiction and persecution; "he was afflicted," as never man was, "from his youth up," from the hour of his birth, when, thrust out from the society of men, he made his bed in the stable at Bethlehem; he was "ready to die," a victim destined and prepared for that death which, by anticipation he tasted of through life; he saw the flaming sword of God's "fierce wrath" waiting to "cut him off" from the land of the living; the "terrors" of the Almighty set themselves in array against him, threatening like the mountainous waves of a tempestuous sea, to overwhelm his amazed soul. Let not the church be offended or despond, but rather let her rejoice in her sufferings, by which through every period of existence from youth to age, she "filleth up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ," who suffers and will be glorified IN his people, as he hath already suffered and been glorified FOR them. See Col. i. 24.

18. *Lover and friend hast thou put far from me* and *mine acquaintance into darkness.*

It is mentioned again, as a most affecting circumstance of Christ's passion, that he was entirely forsaken, and left all alone, in that dreadful day. The bitter cup was presented filled to the brim, and he drank it off to the dregs. No man could share in those sufferings by which all other men were to be redeemed. His "lovers and friends," his disciples and acquaintance, "were put far from him;" they all "forsook him and fled" to hide themselves from the fury of the Jews, "in darkness," in dark, i. e. secret places. Thus it is written in the Psalms, and thus in the Gospels it is recorded to have happened. Oftentimes, O blessed Jesu, do we forsake thee; but do not thou forsake us, or take thy Holy Spirit from us.

* Dominus ipse de se, Psal. lxxxviii. 16. "Fero terrores tuos; animi linquor." Loquitur de extremis suis angoribus et doloribus. VITRINGA in Jesai ii. 667.

SEVENTEENTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM LXXXIX.

ARGUMENT.

THIS Psalm is appointed by the church to be read on Christmas-day. It celebrates, ver. 1—4, the mercies of God in Christ, promised to David; 5—13, the almighty power of Jehovah, manifested in his works and dispensations; 14, his justice, mercy, and truth; 15—18, the happiness and security of his people; 19—37, his covenant made with David, as the representative of Messiah, who should come of his seed; 38—45, the church lamenteth her distressful state, at the time when this Psalm was penned;* 46—51, she prayeth for the accomplishment of the promise; and, in the mean time, 52, blesseth Jehovah.

1. *I will sing of the mercies of the* LORD *for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations.*

The "mercies of Jehovah" have ever employed the voices of believers to celebrate them. These mercies were promises to the human race, in their great representative and surety, before the world began; 2 Tim. i. 9. Tit. i. 2. they were prefigured by ancient dispensations; and in part, fulfilled, at the incarnation of Christ. The "faithfulness" of God, in so fulfilling them, is now "made known," by the holy services of the Christian church, "to all generations."

2. *For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever: thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens.*

Whatever be at any time the state of the church on earth, she knoweth that the foundation of God standeth sure; that the sacred edifice, raised thereon, will be incorruptible and eternal as "heaven" itself, where only mercy and truth are to have their perfect work, in the everlasting felicity of the re-

* Sedecià capto, domo David e solio deturbata, promissiones Dei irritas videri propheta queritur, necdum adesse Christum. BOSSUET. Dr. Kennicott imagines it to have been composed by Isaiah, as a solemn and public address to God, at the time when Rezin and Pekah were advancing against Jerusalem.

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deemed. Of this felicity, which is to be the consummation of God's promises, and our hopes, we behold some faint resemblance, as often as we view the stability, the beauty and the glory of the visible material "heavens."

3. *I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant:* 4. *Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations.*

The two former verses set forth a profession of faith in God's mercy; these two assign the ground of such faith; namely, the covenant which God is here introduced as declaring that he had made with David, and which he did make with him by the prophet Nathan; 2 Sam. vii. 12. &c. The covenant relates to David's "seed" and to the "establishment of his throne" in that seed; literally, in Solomon for a time; spiritually, in Christ for ever: "When thy days shall be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father and he shall be my son." These last words are cited by the apostle, Heb. i. 5. as spoken of Christ, to evince his superiority over the angels. Yet, that the whole passage does, in the letter relate to Solomon, can admit of no doubt, he being the "seed" and immediate successor of David, and the person appointed to "build an house for God's name." Here then we have an incontestible proof, that the covenant with David had Messiah for the object; that Solomon was a figure of him; and that the Scripture hath sometimes a double sense*. It is moreover to be observed that the covenants made with Abraham, David, &c. all had their original and foundation in the covenant made with MESSIAH, who was the true Father of the faithful, the beloved and chosen of God; the great Prophet, Priest, and King; the only person qualified to be a Sponsor, and to engage in a covenant with the Father for mankind. His sufferings were the price of our redemption: and because he suffered in the flesh, as "the Son of David," therefore is he "established for ever, and his throne built up to all generations." Remarkable are the words of the angel to Mary; "The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Luke, i. 32.

5. *And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O* LORD *; thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints:* or, *The heavens shall praise thy wonders, O* LORD *; and the saints thy faithfulness in the congregation.*

Did not "the heavens praise the wonders of Jehovah," when a choir of angels descended from above, to sing an anthem, at the birth of Christ? And how must the celestial courts have resounded with the hallelujahs of those blessed spirits, when they again received their King, returning in triumph from the conquest of his enemies? Nor do "the saints" omit to celebrate God's "faithfulness in the congregation" upon earth, while "with angels and archangels, and all the company of heaven, they laud and magnify his glorious name, evermore praising him, and saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord most high."

6. *For who in the heaven can be compared unto the* LORD? who *among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the* LORD? 7. *God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints: and to be had in reverence of all* them that are *about him.* 8. *O* LORD *God of hosts, who is a strong* LORD *like unto thee? or to thy faithfulness round about thee?* or, *and thy faithfulness is round about thee.*

These verses proclaim that right and title which Jehovah has to the praises of all his creatures in "heaven and earth." No one of them, however excellent and glorious, however deified and adored by fond and foolish man, can enter the lists, and contest the superiority with its Maker. High over all is the throne of God: before him "angels" veil their faces, "saints" prostrate themselves with lowest reverence, and created nature trembles at his word: his "power" is almighty, and derived from none; and with "truth" he is on all sides invested as with a garment: the former enables him, the latter (if we may so express it) binds him, to perform those gracious promises, which mercy prompted him to make, concerning our eternal redemption.

9. *Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise thou stillest them.*

The extent of the ocean, the multitude of its waves, and their fury, when excited by a storm, render it, in that state, the most tremendous object in nature; nor doth any thing, which man beholds, give him so just an idea of human impotence, and of that divine power which can excite and calm so boisterous an element at pleasure. God himself therefore frequently appeals to this instance of his omnipotence, see Job, xxxviii. 11. Jer. v. 22. an attribute of which our Lord showed himself to have been possessed

* "Disposui testamentum:" percussi fœdus cum electo meo; id est, David et Christo. BOSSUET.

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when, being with his disciples in the ship, he arose and rebuked a tempestuous wind and a raging sea, and there was instantly a calm. In all our troubles and temptations, be thou, blessed Jesu, with us, and then they shall never finally overwhelm us.

10. *Thou hast broken Rahab*, i. e. Egypt, *in pieces, as one that is slain: thou hast scattered thine enemies with thy strong arm.*

The destruction of Pharaoh and the Egyptians is here mentioned as another instance of God's mighty power. And it is probable that the foregoing verse was intended to allude more particularly to that miraculous exertion of God's sovereignty over the waters, the division of the Red Sea, which happened at the same time; as these two events are generally spoken of together. Thus Isaiah: "Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab," i. e. Egypt, "and wounded the dragon," i. e. Pharaoh? "Art thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep, that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over?" li. 9 The same power which effected all this, hath since, in Christ Jesus, overcome the world, destroyed the works of the devil, and ransomed mankind from the depths of the grave.

11. *The heavens* are *thine, the earth also* is *thine*: as for *the world, and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them.* 12. *The north and the south, thou hast created them; Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name.*

The "heavens," and all the glorious bodies there ranged in beautiful order; the "earth," with its rich furniture, and the unnumbered tribes of its inhabitants, through its whole extent, from "north to south," and from east to west; all these are so many evidences of that wisdom and power which at the beginning contrived and formed them; all, in their respective ways, declare the glory, and speak the praises of their great Creator; but chiefly the holy land, and the fruitful hills which adorned it. "Tabor" in one part, and "Hermon" in another, formerly seemed, as it were, to "rejoice" and sing, for the abundant favors showered down upon them by the God of Israel, who hath since caused all nations no less to exult and triumph in his saving NAME.

13. *Thou hast a mighty arm; strong is thy hand*, and *high is thy right hand.*

The Psalmist, having produced and meditated on some eminent instances of divine power, draws this general conclusion from the premises. Towards the Christian church "the arm of Jehovah" hath been revealed in a still more extraordinary manner. She reflecteth on the wonders wrought by Jesus; a conquest over more formidable enemies than Pharaoh and his Egyptians; a redemption from more cruel bondage; salvation from sin and death; a new creation, new heavens, and new earth, a new Jerusalem, and a spiritual Sion. With additional conviction may she therefore exclaim, "thou hast a mighty arm; strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand!"

14. *Justice and judgment* are *the habitation*, Heb. *the establishment, of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face.*

Although the power of God be infinite, yet is it never exerted, but under the direction of his other attributes. When he goeth, as a judge, to his tribunal, "mercy and truth go before his face;" they are represented as preceding him, to give notice of his advent and to prepare his way. "All the ways," or dispensations "of the Lord," as it is elsewhere observed, "are mercy and truth;" Ps. xxv. 10, they are the substance of all his revelations, which either promise salvation, or relate the performance of such promises. By these is man warned and prepared for "judgment;" which is to be the last and finishing scene. And when the great Judge of all the earth shall from his throne pronounce the irreversible sentence, not a creature then present shall be able to accuse that sentence of injustice.—After this model should the thrones of princes, and the tribunals of earthly magistrates, be constituted in "justice and judgment," adorned with "mercy and truth."

15. *Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O* LORD, *in the light of thy countenance.*

Next to the praises of Jehovah, is declared the happiness of those who have him for their God; who "know the joyful sound, or sound of the trumpet," by which the festivals of the Jewish church were proclaimed, and the people were called together to the offices of devotion; who enjoy the "light" of truth, and through grace are enabled to "walk" therein. These blessings are now become our own: the evangelical trumpet hath sounded through the once Heathen world; the Sun of righteousness hath risen upon all nations. Let us attend to the "joyful sound," let us "walk" in the glorious "light."

16. *In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted.* 17. *For thou* art *the glory of their strength: and in thy favor our horn shall be exalted.* 18. *For the* LORD *is our defence; and the holy One of Israel is our King.*

It is the duty of Christians, as it was that of Israelites, to ascribe all their strength,

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their success, and their glory, whether in matters temporal or spiritual, to Jehovah alone. Having heard the sound, and experienced the illuminating and reviving influences of the Gospel, in the name and in the salvation of God we rejoice all the day, and in his righteousness only we trust to be exalted to heaven; to him we attribute the glory of that strength, with which, in time of temptation, we may find ourselves happily endued; and in his favor, or grace, our horn, or the efforts of our power, shall be exalted, and crowned with victory; our defence in all dangers is from Jehovah, who was ever the shield of his ancient people; and the Holy One of Israel is our Redeemer and our King.

19. *Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid*, or, *placed, help upon*, or, *in*, one that is *mighty; I have exalted* one *chosen out of the people.*

The covenant made with David was mentioned in general terms above, at verses 4, 5. But a more particular account is now given of God's dispensations relative to the son of Jesse, and his posterity. We are presented with the substance of the revelation made upon this subject, "in vision," to one of the prophets, perhaps Samuel, or Nathan, here styled an "holy one," or religious person, one favored and accepted by God, who is introduced as manifesting to this his prophet the divine counsels concerning David; "I have placed help upon, or in one who shall become an eminent and mighty Saviour of Israel; from among all the people I have chosen, and determined to exalt him, for that purpose, to the throne." Thus was Messiah foretold, in prophetical visions and revelations, as the person designed to be the mighty Redeemer of his church; thus, in the fulness of time, was he chosen from among all the children of men, and exalted, through sufferings, to an eternal throne.

20. *I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him:* 21. *With whom my hand shall be established; mine arm also shall strengthen him.*

David was the servant of God; he was, by the prophet Samuel, anointed with oil; he was strengthened and established in his kingdom, by the hand and arm of Jehovah. But never let Christians fail, in this eminently figurative character, to contemplate that true DAVID (for so HE is called, Ezek. xxxiv. 23, xxxvii. 25.) the BELOVED Son of God; "the servant and elect of Jehovah, in whom his soul delighted, and on whom he put his Spirit;" Isa. xlii. 1. whom he "anointed with his holy oil, with the oil of gladness, with the Holy Ghost and with power;" Ps. xlv. 7. Acts, x. 38, whom he strengthened, and established in his spiritual kingdom, with his hand and arm, and the might of his omnipotence.

22. *The enemy shall not exact upon*, or, *deceive him: nor the son of wickedness afflict*, or *subdue, him.* 23. *And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him.* 24. *But my faithfulness and my mercy* shall be *with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted.*

These promises were fulfilled to David, when God delivered him out of the hand of Saul, and of all his other adversaries. See 2 Sam. xxii. 1. And in what a full, perfect, and divine sense, were they verified to Christ! That subtle enemy, "which deceiveth the whole world," was not able to deceive him; neither the sons nor the father of wickedness could overthrow and subdue him: all opposition fell before him, and they who hated him suffered unparalleled desolation; the promised faithfulness and mercy of Jehovah were ever with him, and his kingdom was exalted with glory and honor.

25. *I will set his hand also in the sea; and his right hand in the rivers.*

The dominions of David and his son Solomon extended from the Mediterranean "sea" to the "rivers" Euphrates, &c.; the empire of Christ is universal over Jews and Gentiles, throughout all the earth. See Ps. lxxii. 8. &c.

26. *He shall cry unto me, Thou* art *my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation.* 27. *Also I will make him* my *first-born, higher than the kings of the earth.*

All this, if in some respects true of David, is much more emphatically so of our Lord Jesus Christ. "Son of God" is one of his distinguished titles; of "the Father" he continually spoke, and to the Father he addressed his prayers and cries, in the days of his flesh; as man he was raised and exalted by the power and glory of the Divinity; he was "the first born of every creature, the first begotten from the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth." Col. i. 15, Rev. i. 5. Make us, blessed Lord, the sons of God, and teach us to cry, Abba, Father; give us victory and dominion over sin and death, that we may live and reign with thee forever.

28. *My mercy will I keep for*, or, *to, him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him.* 29. *His seed also will I make* to endure *forever, and his throne as the days of heaven.*

God kept his mercy and covenant with David, by preserving the line of his posterity, until his great antitype, Messiah, the subject of all the promises, came, by whom the king-

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dom was established forever, being changed into a spiritual one, which is to be transferred from earth to heaven, and rendered coeval with those eternal mansions of the blessed.

30. *If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments;* 31. *If they break,* or, *profane, my statutes, and keep not my commandments;* 32. *Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes.* 33. *Nevertheless, my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.* 34. *My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.*

The posterity of David were to enjoy God's favor, or be deprived of it, as they proved obedient or disobedient to his "law;" as they executed or perverted its civil "judgments;" as they observed or neglected its ceremonial "statutes," or religious institutions; as they kept or broke its "commandments," or moral precepts. When they became rebellious, idolatrous, and profligate, the rod was lifted up, and due chastisement inflicted, sometimes by the immediate hand of Heaven, sometimes by the instrumentality of their heathen adversaries; famine and pestilence, war and captivity, were at different times employed to reclaim backsliding Israel. But still, the "covenant" of God in Christ stood sure; the Jewish nation was preserved, through all changes and revolutions, "until the Seed came to whom the promise was made;" nor was Jerusalem destroyed, before the new and spiritual kingdom of Messiah was set up in the earth. Christian communities, and the individuals that compose them, are in like manner corrected and punished for their offences. "Nevertheless, God's loving kindness will he not utterly take from us, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail. His covenant will he not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of his lips." So—"I am with you always," says the Redeemer, "even to the end of the world; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against my church:" Matt. xxviii. 20. xvi. 18. Nor shall the world be destroyed, until Christ come again, and his glorious kingdom be ready to appear.

35. *Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David.* 36. *His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me.* 37. *It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven.*

The promise, covenant, and oath of God, which he declareth shall never fail, are here repeated. They relate to Christ, that "Seed," or "Son of David," who "endureth for ever." His throne is resplendent as the "sun," and shall continue, after that luminary is extinguished: his church is permanent as the "moon," though, like her, subject to vicissitudes, and liable, for a time, to be obscured by eclipses, during her present state upon earth. And while the rainbow shall be seen in the clouds, man has "a faithful witness in heaven" of the immutable truth of God's word, and the infallible accomplishment of what he promises. "Look upon the rainbow," saith the wise son of Sirach, "and praise him who made it: very beautiful it is in the brightness thereof; it compasseth the heaven about with a glorious circle, and the hands of the most High have bended it:" Ecclus. xlviii. 11. But let us not forget likewise, when we look upon the rainbow, to praise him who made it to be a sign and sacred symbol of mercy; in which capacity we behold it, to our great and endless comfort, compassing the throne of Christ with a gracious, as well as glorious, circle. "There was a RAINBOW round about the throne." Rev. iv. 3. Ezek. i. 28.

38. *But thou hast cast off and abhorred, thou hast been wroth with thine anointed.* 39. *Thou hast made void the covenant of thy servant, thou hast profaned his crown,* by casting it *to the ground.*

In the former part of our Psalm, we have seen what the divine promises were, which had been made to the house of David. By the latter part, upon which we are entering, it appears, that the Psalm was written at a time, when the church of Israel was in such a manner oppressed and reduced by her enemies that her members began almost to despair of those promises receiving their accomplishment. God seemed to have "cast off" and "abhorred" his "anointed" and "servant," that is, David, or rather the prince of his family, who was upon the throne when this captivity and desolation happened; the "covenant" seemed to be overturned and "made void," when the "crown" of Israel was defiled in the dust.

40. *Thou hast broken down all his hedges, thou hast brought his strong holds to ruin.* 41. *All that pass by the way spoil him; he is a reproach to his neighbors.* 42. *Thou hast set up the right hand of his adversaries: thou hast made all his enemies to rejoice.* 43. *Thou hast also turned the edge of his sword, and hast not made him to stand in the battle.* 44. *Thou hast made his glory to cease, and cast his throne down to the ground.* 45. *The days of his youth hast thou shortened; thou hast covered him with shame.*

The manifold calamities of Sion are in these verses enumerated: The demolition of fences and fortifications; the cruel ravages consequent thereupon; the shame of

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defeats; the reproaches and insults of victorious adversaries; the dishonors of violent and untimely death. In days like these here described, when the church and the king are permitted to fall into the hands of those who hate them, and to drink thus deeply of the cup of affliction, distrust and despondency are apt to seize upon the minds of men. Nay, when the faithful few beheld the true "Son of David," and "Anointed" of Jehovah, in the day of his sufferings; when they saw him, without help or defence, "spoiled and reproached by his neighbors;" when they viewed "the right hand of his adversaries set up," and all his "enemies rejoicing" over him; his "glory made to cease," and his "crown profaned in the dust; the days of his youth shortened," and himself delivered over to a "shameful" as well as painful death; they then began to think "the covenant made void," and the promises at an end. "We trusted," said they, "that it had been he who should have redeemed Israel!" Luke, xxiv. 21. And although Christ be long since risen from the dead, and ascended into heaven, yet the prevalence of iniquity, and the oppressions of the church, have been, and in the last days will be such, as to put the faith and hope of his servants to a sore trial, while they wait for his second, as the ancient Jews did for his first advent.

46. *How long*, LORD? *Wilt thou hide thyself for ever? shall thy wrath burn like fire?* 47. *Remember how short my time is: wherefore hast thou made all men in vain?* Or, as Ainsworth translates the verse, *Remember how transitory I am, unto what vanity thou hast created all the sons of Adam.* 48. *What man* is he that *liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul*, or, *animal frame, from the hand of the grave?* 49. LORD, *where* are *thy former loving kindnesses*, which *thou swarest unto David in thy truth?*

This is the humble and dutiful expostulation of the church with God in all her distresses upon the earth. By asking, "How long, LORD? wilt thou be angry for ever?" she tacitly pleadeth his promise not to be so: she urgeth the shortness of man's life here below, the universality of the fatal sentence, the impossibility of avoiding death, and, if nothing farther was to happen, the frustration of the divine counsels concerning man. From thence she entreateth God to remember the "loving kindnesses" once promised by him with an oath to David, as related in the former part of the Psalm. These "loving kindnesses" are called, in Isaiah, lv. 3. "the sure mercies of David;" which "sure mercies of David" are affirmed by St. Paul, Acts, xiii. 34. to have been then confirmed on Israel, when, in the person of Jesus, God raised our nature from the grave. To a resurrection, therefore, believers have ever aspired; thither have they directed their wishes, and on that event have they fixed their hopes, as the end of temporal sorrows, and the beginning of eternal joys.

50. *Remember*, LORD, *the reproach of thy servants;* how *I do bear in my bosom* the reproach *of all the mighty people:* 51. *Wherewith thine enemies have reproached, O* LORD; *wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of thine anointed.*

The last argument urged by the church, in her expostulation with God for a speedy redemption, is, the continual reproach to which she was subject, on account of the promise being delayed. The "mighty people," or Heathen nations, who held her in captivity, and were witnesses of her wretched and forlorn estate, ridiculed her pretensions to perpetuity of empire in the house of David; they blasphemed the God, who was said to have made such promises; and "reproached the footsteps," or mocked at the tardy advent of his Messiah,* who was to establish in Israel his everlasting throne. All these cruel taunts and insults she was obliged to "bear in her bosom," and there to suppress them in silence, having nothing to answer in the day of her calamity and seeming destitution. St. Peter gives us a like account of the state of the Christian church in the latter days: he exhorts us to be "mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandments of the apostles of the Lord and Saviour, because there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming?" 2 Pet. iii. 4.

52. *Blessed* be *the* LORD *for evermore. Amen and Amen.*

But whatever be at any time our distress, either as a community or as individuals, still are we to believe, still to hope, still to bless and praise Jehovah, whose word is true, whose works are faithful, whose chastisements are mercies, and all whose promises are, in Christ Jesus, yea, and amen, for evermore.

* "Exprobraverunt vestigio Christi tui:" tarditatem vestigiorum Christi tui. Chald. Irridebant nos quòd non adveniret expectatus ille Liberator, sive Cyrus, sive potius Christus de semine Davidis, regno ejus instaurando, et in æternum firmando. BOSSUET.

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EIGHTEENTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM XC.

ARGUMENT.

THIS Psalm is called, in its title, "A prayer of Moses, the man of God." By him it is imagined to have been composed when God shortened the days of the murmuring Israelites in the wilderness. See Numb. xiv. It is, however, a Psalm of general use, and is made, by the church, a part of her funeral service. It containeth, 1, 2, an address to the eternal and unchangeable God, the Saviour and Preserver of his people; 3—10, a most affecting description of man's mortal and transitory state on earth since the fall; 11, a complaint, that few meditate in such a manner upon death, as to prepare themselves for it; 12, a prayer for grace so to do; 13—17, and for the mercies of redemption.

1. LORD, *thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.* 2. *Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou* art *God.*

The Psalmist, about to describe man's fleeting and transitory state, first directed us to contemplate the unchangeable nature and attributes of God, who hath always been a "dwelling place," or place of defence and refuge, affording protection and comfort to his people in the world, as he promised to be before the world began, and will, in a more glorious manner, continue to be after its dissolution. See, for a parallel, Ps. cii. 25. &c. with St. Paul's application, Heb. 1. 10.

3. *Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men.*

Death was the penalty inflicted on man for sin. The latter part of the verse alludes to the fatal sentence, Gen, iii. 19. "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." How apt are we to forget both our original and our end!

4. *For a thousand years in thy sight* are but *as yesterday when it is past, and* as *a watch in the night.*

The connection between the verse preceding and the verse now before us, seems to be this. God sentenced man to death. It is true, the execution of the sentence was at first deferred, and the term of human life suffered to extend to near a thousand years. But what was even that, what is any period of time, or time itself, if compared with the duration of the Eternal? All time is equal, when it is past; a thousand years, when gone, are forgotten as yesterday; and the longest life of man, to a person who looks back upon it, may appear only as three hours, or one quarter of the night.

5. *Thou carriest them away as with a flood they are* as *asleep: in the morning* they are *like grass* which *groweth up*, or, *as grass* that *changeth.* 6. *In the morning it flourisheth and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth.*

The shortness of life, and the suddenness of our departure hence, are illustrated by three similitudes. The first is that of a "flood," or torrent pouring unexpectedly and impetuously from the mountains, and sweeping all before it in an instant. The second is that of "sleep," from which when a man awaketh, he thinketh the time passed in it to have been nothing. In the third similitude, man is compared to the "grass" of the field. In the morning of youth fair and beautiful, he groweth up and flourisheth; in the evening of old age (and how often before that evening!) he is cut down by the stroke of death; all his juices, to the circulation of which he stood indebted for life, health, and strength, are dried up; he withereth, and turneth again to his earth. "Surely all flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field!" Isa. xl. 6. Of this truth, the word of God, the voice of nature, and daily experience, join to assure us: yet who ordereth his life and conversation as if he believed it?

7. *For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled.* 8. *Thou hast set our iniquities before thee; our secret* sins *in the light of thy countenance.*

The generations of men are troubled and consumed by divers diseases, and sundry kinds of death, through the displeasure of God; his displeasure is occasioned by their sins, all of which he seeth and punisheth. If Moses wrote this Psalm, the provocations and chastisements of Israel are here alluded to. But the case of the Israelites in the wilderness, is the case of Christians in the world: and the same thing is true both in them and in us.

9. *For all our days are passed away in thy wrath; we spend our years as a tale* that is told.

Life is compared to a "tale" that is told and forgotten; to a "word" which is but air, or breath, and vanisheth into nothing, as soon as spoken; or perhaps, as the original generally signifies, to a "meditation, a thought," which is of a nature still more fleeting and transient.

10. *The days of our years* are *threescore years and ten, and if by reason of strength,* they be *fourscore years, yet* is *their strength*

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labor and sorrow: for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

This again might be primarily spoken by Moses, concerning Israel. The generation of those who came out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upwards, fell within the space of forty years, in the wilderness; Numb. xiv. 29; and they who lived longest experienced only labor and sorrow, until they were cut off, like grass, and, by the breath of God's displeasure, blown away from the face of the earth. Like the Israelites, we have been brought out of Egypt, and sojourn in the wilderness; like them we murmur, and offend God our Saviour; like them we fall and perish. To the age of seventy years, few of us can hope to attain; labor and sorrow are our portion in the world; we are mowed down, as this year's grass of the field; we fly away, and are no more seen in the land of the living.

11. *Who knoweth the power of thine anger? Even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath.*

Houbigant renders the verse thus: "Quis novit vim iræ tuæ; et, prout terribilis es, furorem tuum?"—"Who knoweth" or considereth, "the power of thine anger; and thy wrath, in proportion as thou art terrible?" that is, in other words, Notwithstanding all the manifestations of God's indignation against sin, which introduced death and every other calamity among men, who is there that knoweth, who that duly considereth and layeth to heart the almighty power of that indignation; who that is induced, by beholding the mortality of his neighbors, to prepare himself for his own departure hence? Such holy consideration is the gift of God, from whom the Psalmist, in the next verse, directeth us to request it.

12. *So teach* us *to number our days, that we may apply* our *hearts unto wisdom.*

He who "numbereth his days," or taketh a right account of the shortness of this present life, compared with the unnumbered ages of that eternity which is future, will soon become a proficient in the school of true wisdom. He will learn to give the preference where it is due; to do good, and suffer evil, upon earth, expecting the reward of both in heaven. Make us wise, blessed Lord, but wise unto salvation.

13. *Return, O* LORD, *how long? and let it repent thee concerning*, or, *be propitiated, towards, thy servants.*

During the reign of death over poor mankind, God is represented as absent; he is therefore by the faithful entreated to "return," and to satisfy their longing desires after salvation; to hasten the day when Messiah should make a "propitiation" for sin, when he should redeem his servants from death, and ransom them from the power of the grave. The Christian, who knoweth that his Lord is risen indeed, looks forward to the resurrection of the just, when death shall be finally swallowed up in victory.

14. *O satisfy us early*, or, *in the morning, with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.* 15. *Make us glad according to the days* wherein *thou hast afflicted us*, and *the years* wherein *we have seen evil.*

The church prayeth for the dawning of that glorious morning, when every cloud shall vanish at the rising of the Sun of righteousness, and night and darkness shall be no more. Then only shall we be "satisfied, or saturated, with the mercy" of Jehovah; then only shall we "rejoice and be glad all our days." The time of our pilgrimage upon earth is a time of sorrow; we grieve for our departed friends; and our surviving friends must soon grieve for us; these are "the days wherein God afflicteth us, these the years wherein we see evil:" but he will hereafter "make us glad according to them;" in proportion to our sufferings, if rightly we bear those sufferings, will be our reward; nay, "these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Then shall our joy be increased, and receive an additional relish from the remembrance of our former sorrow; then shall we bless the days and the years which exercised our faith, and perfected our patience; and then shall we bless God, who chastised us for a season, that he might save us for ever.

16. *Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children.* 17. *And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish thou the work of our hands upon us, yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.*

The redemption of man is that "work" of God whereby his "glory" is manifested to all generations, and which all generations do therefore long to behold accomplished. For this purpose the faithful beseech God to let his "beauty," his splendor, the light of his countenance, his grace and favor, be upon them: to "establish the work of their hands," to bless, prosper, and perfect them in their Christian course and warfare; until, through him, they shall be enabled to subdue sin, and triumph over death.

PSALM XCI.

ARGUMENT.

THE prophet, 1—10, declareth the security of the righteous man under the care and protection of heaven, in times of danger, when, 11, 12, a guard of angels is set about him. 13, His final victory [illegible]

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mies of his salvation is foretold; and, 14—16, God himself is introduced, promising him deliverance, exaltation, glory, and immortality. The Psalm is addressed, primarily, to Messiah. That it relateth to him, Jews and Christians are agreed; and the devil, Matt. iv. 6, cited two verses from it, as universally known and allowed to have been spoken of him.

1. *He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.* 2. *I will say of the Lord,* He is *my refuge and my fortress: my God, in him I will trust.* 3. *Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler,* and *from the noisome pestilence.*

In these verses, as they now stand, there is much obscurity and confusion. Bishop Lowth, in his xxvith Lecture, seemeth to have given their true construction: "He who dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High; who abideth under the shadow of the Almighty; who saith of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I will trust;"—leaving the sentence thus imperfect, the Psalmist maketh a beautiful apostrophe to that person whom he has been describing—"Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence." The description is eminently applicable to the man Christ Jesus.* He is represented as dwelling, like the ark in the Holy of holies, under the immediate "shadow" and protection of the Almighty, who was his "refuge and fortress" against the open attacks of his enemies; his preserver from the "snares" of the devil, and from the universal contagion of sin, that spiritual "pestilence." In all dangers, whether spiritual or corporeal, the members of Christ's mystical body may reflect with comfort, that they are under the same Almighty Protector.

4. *He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth* shall be thy *shield and buckler.*

The security afforded by a superintending Providence, to those who trust therein, is here, with the utmost beauty and elegance, compared to that shelter, which the young of birds are always sure to find under the "wings" of their dam, when fear causeth them to fly thither for refuge: see Deut. xxxii. 11. Matt. xxiii. 37. The "truth" of God's word, wherein he promiseth to be our defence, is, to a beliver, his "shield and buckler," in the day of battle and war.

* Ode Davidica insignis xci. agit directe et primo loco de tegmine et defensione quam Deus Christo Jesu Doctori et apostolis ipsius præstaret. VITRINGA, Comment. in Jesai. ii. 565.

5. *Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night;* nor *for the arrow* that *flieth by day:* 6. Nor *for the pestilence* that *walketh in darkness:* nor *for the destruction* that *wasteth at noon-day.*

How much man standeth in need of the above-mentioned protection of heaven, appeareth from a survey of the dangers, to which he is continually exposed. Various are the terrors of the night; manifold the perils of the day; from diseases whose infection maketh its progress unobserved; from assaults, casualties, and accidents, which can neither be foreseen, nor guarded against. The soul hath likewise her enemies, ready to attack and surprise her at all hours. Avarice and ambition are abroad watching for her in the day; while concupiscence, like a pestilence, "walketh in darkness." In adversity she is disturbed by terrors; in prosperity, still more endangered by pleasures. But Jesus Christ has overcome the world, to prevent us from being overcome by it.

7. *A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand:* but *it shall not come nigh thee.*

This promise has oftentimes, in a wonderful manner, been verified to those faithful servants of God, whom the pestilence itself hath not deterred from doing the duties of their station. The bishop and some of the intendants of Marseilles, who continued to perform their respective offices, during the whole time of the plague there in 1720, are signal and well-known instances. Sin is a pestilence, the contagion of which no son of Adam ever escaped but the blessed Jesus. He stood alone untouched by its venom; thousands and ten thousands, all the myriads of mankind, fell around him; "but it did not come nigh Him." Heal us of this our distemper, O thou Physician of souls, and let it not prove our everlasting destruction; "stand," like thy representative of old, "between the dead and the living, and let the plague be stayed:" Numb. xvi. 47, 48.

8. *Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.*

The meaning is, that the righteous person all along spoken of, himself secure from the judgments of God, should in safety behold the destruction wrought by them upon impenitent and incorrigible sinners. This will be the case with the church, as well as her glorious Head, at the last day.

9. *Because thou hast made the* LORD which is *my refuge,* even *the Most High, thy habitation;* 10. *There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.*

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The sentiment in these verses is evidently the same with that in verses 5, 6, namely, that God preserveth such as trust in him, after the pattern of the holy Jesus, from those evils, and from that perdition, which are reserved for the ungodly. Dr. Durell translates the 9th verse, in the way of apostrophe, literally thus—"Surely, thou, O Lord, art my refuge; O Most High, thou hast fixed thine habitation;" i. e. in Sion, to be the protector of his servant.

11. *For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.* 12. *They shall bear thee up in* their *hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.*

This passage was cited by the devil, who tempted our Lord to cast himself from a pinnacle of the temple, upon presumption of the promise here made, that angels should guard and support him in all dangers. But Christ, in his answer, at once detecteth and exposeth the sophistry of the grand deceiver, by showing, that the promise belonged only to those who fell unavoidably into danger, in the course of duty; such might hope for the help and protection of heaven; but that he who should wantonly and absurdly throw himself into peril, merely to try whether Providence would bring him out of it, must expect to perish for his pains. "Jesus saith unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not TEMPT the Lord thy God." Matt. iv. 7.

13. *Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under thy feet.*

The fury and the venom of our spiritual enemies are often in Scripture portrayed by the natural qualities of "lions and serpents." Messiah's complete victory over those enemies seemeth here to be predicted. Through grace he maketh us more than conquerors in our conflicts with the same adversaries. "The God of peace," saith St. Paul, "shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly:" Rom. xvi. 20. And it is observable that, when the seventy disciples return to Christ with joy, saying, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name;" he answers in the metaphorical language of our Psalm: "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on scorpions and serpents, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not, that the SPIRITS are subject unto you," &c. Luke, x. 17. Give us, O Lord, courage to resist the "lion's" rage, and wisdom to elude the wiles of the "serpent."

14. *Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him; I will set him on high, because he hath known my name* 15. *He shall call upon me, and I will answer him; I* will be *with him in trouble, I will deliver him, and honor,* or, *glorify, him.* 16. *With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation.*

In the former part of our Psalm, the prophet had spoken in his own person; here God himself is plainly introduced as the speaker. And, O how sweet, how delightful and comfortable are his words, addressed eminently to his beloved Son Messiah; and in him to all of us, his adopted children, and the heirs of eternal life; to all who love God, and have "known his name!" To such are promised, an answer to their prayers; the presence of their heavenly Father with them; in the day of trouble, protection and deliverance; salvation, and honor, and glory, and immortality. All these promises have already been made good to our gracious Head and Representative. His prayers have been heard; his sufferings are over; he is risen and ascended; and behold, he liveth and reigneth for evermore. Swift fly the intermediate years, and rise that long-expected morning, when He who is gone "to prepare a place for us, shall come again, and take us to himself, that where he is we may be also!"

PSALM XCII.

ARGUMENT.

The title of this Psalm is, "A Psalm, or Song, for the Sabbath Day." It teacheth, 1—5, the duty, time, and manner, of giving thanks for the works and dispensations of God. Thoughtless men are admonished, 6, to reflect upon the final issue of all these works and dispensations; namely, 7—9, the utter perdition of the ungodly, and, 10—14, the exaltation of the church in Christ Jesus, 15, to the praise and glory of God most high.

1. It is a *good* thing *to give thanks unto the* LORD, *and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High:* 2. *To show forth thy loving kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night:* 3. *Upon an instrument of ten strings and upon the psaltery; upon the harp with a solemn sound.*

"Thanksgiving" is the duty, and ought to be the delight, of a Christian. It is his duty, as being the least return he can make to his great Benefactor: it ought to be his delight, for it is that of angels, and will be that of every grateful heart, whether in heaven or on earth. The "mercy" of God in promising salvation, and his "faithfulness" in accomplishing it, are inexhaustible subjects for "morn-

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ing and evening" praises; every instrument should be strung, and every voice tuned to celebrate them, until day and night come to an end. But more especially should this be done on the "sabbath day;" which, when so employed, affords a lively resemblance of that eternal sabbath, to be hereafter kept by the redeemed, in the kingdom of God.

4. *For thou,* LORD, *hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands.*

A prospect of creation in the vernal season, fallen as it is, inspires the mind with a joy which no words can express. But how doth the regenerate soul exult and triumph, at beholding that "work" of God's "hand," whereby he hath created all things anew in Christ Jesus! If we can be pleased with such a world as this, where sin and death have fixed their habitation; shall we not much rather admire those other heavens, and that other earth, wherein dwell righteousness and life? What are we to think of the palace, since even the prison is not without its charms!

5. *O* LORD, *how great are thy works!* and *thy thoughts are very deep.* 6. *A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this.*

Glorious are the works, profound the counsels, marvellous the dispensations of God, in nature, in providence, in grace. But all are lost to the man void of spiritual discernment; who, like his fellow "brutes," is bowed down to the earth, and knoweth no pleasures but those of sense. Here he hath chosen his paradise, and set up his tabernacle: not considering that his tabernacle must shortly be taken down, and he must remove hence for ever.

7. *When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish;* it is *that they shall be destroyed for ever.* 8. *But thou,* LORD, art most *high for evermore.*

It is not improbable, that these verses should be connected with that preceding, thus—"A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this;" namely, that "When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall be destroyed forever;" they are only nourishing themselves like senseless cattle in plentiful pastures, for the approaching day of slaughter. He who is ignorant of the final issue of things, who attendeth not to his eternal interest, he is, in Scripture language, "the brutish man," and the "fool" who knoweth not the works, neither understandeth the designs of heaven. When the "grass" hath attained to its most flourishing estate, and all the flowers of the field are in perfect beauty, then the mower entereth with his scythe. What a beautiful and instructive emblem is here held forth to us; what a forcible admonition to trust only in him, who without "variableness or shadow of turning," is "most high for evermore!"

9. *For, lo, thine enemies, O* LORD, *lo, thine enemies shall perish: all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered.* 10. *But my horn shalt thou exalt like* the horn of *an unicorn: I shall be,* or, *I am, anointed with fresh oil.*

The "workers of iniquity" are the "enemies of Jehovah," and will be "scattered" by the breath of his displeasure, as grass, after it is cut down, dried up, and withered, is driven away by the whirlwinds of heaven. "But my horn," saith the Psalmist (it is likely in the person of Messiah), "my horn," that is, the strength and power of my kingdom, "shalt thou exalt like the horn of the unicorn," * like the power of the strongest creatures, to which that of states and empires is often compared; "I shall be," or, "I am, anointed with fresh oil;" I am appointed and consecrated king by the holy unction. Christians have "an unction from the Holy One," by which they are enabled to subdue their spiritual enemies; they reign over their passions and affections; they are exalted in the Redeemer: they are "made unto their God kings and priests." 1 John, ii. 20. Rev. v. 10.

11. *Mine eye also shall see* my desire *on mine enemies;* and *mine ears shall hear* my desire *of the wicked that rise up against me.*

The words, "my desire," are twice inserted by our translators. But would it not be better, if we were to supply the elipsis in this manner, "Mine eye shall behold the fall of mine enemies; and mine ear shall hear the destruction of the wicked that rise up against me?" The sense of the verse is plain. It is intended to express an assurance of faith, an humble confidence in the promises of God, that our efforts shall at length be crowned with victory over every thing which resisteth and opposeth itself; and that the day is coming, when we shall view all the enemies of our salvation dead at our feet.

12. *The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.*

The momentary prosperity of the wicked was compared above to the transient verdure of "grass." The durable felicity of the righteous is here likened to the lasting strength and beauty of "palms" and "cedars." But chiefly is the comparison applicable to that

* Heb. רְאֵמִים an eastern animal of the "stag" or "deer" kind, remarkable for its height, strength, and fierceness.

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Just One, the King of Righteousness, and Tree of Life; eminent and upright; ever verdant and fragrant; under the greatest pressure and weight of sufferings, still ascending toward heaven; affording both fruit and protection; incorruptible and immortal. "I sat down," saith the church, "under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste." Song, ii. 3.

13. *Those that be planted in the house of the* Lord, *shall flourish in the courts of our God.*

Believers are styled by Isaiah, "Trees of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah:" ch. lxi. 3. They are planted by the living waters of comfort, "in the house of God;" where, under the means of grace, they "flourish" in hope of glory; "fenced and enclosed by the discipline and orders of the church, and by the consequent favor and protection of heaven; their verdure is conspicuous, and ever constant, whether in the summer of prosperity, or the winter of adversity; their actions and principles are ever upright and fair; yea, their very leaf exhales a delightful perfume, by a holy example and conversation; their affections and desires are ever ascending towards the noblest and most sublime objects, the things that are above, the glorious things of heaven."*

14. *They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing.*

Happy the man whose goodness is always progressive, and whose virtues increase with his years; who loseth not, in multiplicity of worldly cares or pleasures, the holy fervors of his first love, but goeth on burning and shining more and more, to the end of his days. The church, like her representative Sarah, is now "well stricken in years;" but we hope that, like her, she will "still bring forth fruit in her old age;" we look for many more "children of promise" to be born unto Christ, both from among the Jews and Gentiles.

15. *To show that the* Lord is *upright:* he is *my rock, and* there is *no unrighteousness in him.*

The fruit brought forth in the church redounds to the glory of God, by whom the trees, in this his new paradise, were planted; it shows to all the world, that he is just and "upright" in his dealings; that he is true to his promises; immovable, as a "rock," in his counsels; determined to punish the wicked, and to reward the good; so that when his proceedings shall come to be unfolded at the last day, it will appear to men and angels, "there is no unrighteousness in him."

* Essay on the Proper Lessons, by Mr. Wogan, vol. iii. p. 49.

EIGHTEENTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM XCIII.

ARGUMENT.

The Jews acknowledge, that the kingdom of Messiah is prophesied of in this Psalm, and in all those which follow, to the hundredth. 1, 2, The church celebrates the majesty, power, and glory, of the eternal King; 3, describes the danger she is often in from persecutions, &c. but, 4, strengtheneth herself in God her Saviour, whose house, 5, ought to be, like himself, full of truth and holiness.

1. *The* Lord *reigneth, he is clothed with majesty; the* Lord *is clothed with strength,* wherewith *he hath girded himself: the world also is established, that it cannot be moved.*

From the beginning, God, as Creator, was sovereign Lord of the universe. He was also formerly, in a more especial manner, King of Israel. But since that time, a new and spiritual kingdom hath been erected by Jesus Christ, as Redeemer, whom the church now celebrates, and whose praises she sings continually. Risen from the dead, and ascended into heaven, the Lord Jesus reigneth, and shall reign, "till he hath put all enemies under his feet:" 1 Cor. xv. 25. By the glorification of his human nature, he is "clothed with majesty: All power is given unto him in heaven and in earth;" Matt. xxviii. 18, so that he is "girded with strength;" and through that strength, he hath "established" the new "world," that is to say, his church, "that it cannot be moved," or subverted, by all the powers of earth and hell.

2. *Thy throne is established of old; thou* art *from everlasting.*

Earthly thrones are temporary; they are set up, and cast down again, neither is any trust to be reposed in them. But the throne of Christ is eternal and unchangeable. Constituted before the foundation of the world, it is to endure when no traces of such a system having once existed shall any more be found.

3. *The floods have lifted up, O* Lord, *the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves.* 4. *The* Lord *on high is mightier than the noise of many waters,* yea, than *the mighty waves of the sea.*

In the first of these verses, the church appears like a ship in a stormy sea, to which she is often compared. Persecutions and afflictions are those "floods," those "waves" of this troublesome world, which threaten every moment to overwhelm and sink her. With a fearful and desponding tone of voice, therefore, she crieth out, "The floods have

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lifted up, O LORD, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up there waves!" But immediately she strengtheneth and comforteth herself in the Lord her God: "The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea." He can say to sorrows and temptations, as he doth to the waters of the ocean, "Peace, be still; hitherto shall ye come, but no farther;" and his word is endued with equal power in both cases.

5. *Thy testimonies are very sure; holiness becometh thine house, O* LORD, *for ever.*

God's "testimonies" are the promises made in Scripture to the church, that he will be with her, during the afflictions which befall her here below, and will, in time, deliver her out of all her troubles. These "testimonies are very sure;" these promises do not, they cannot, fail. "Holiness," therefore, which consisteth in obedience and patience, "becometh," is the proper ornament, grace, and beauty of, "his house," and of Christians, those living stones that compose it. Sacred and inviolable is the word of our King; sacred and inviolable should be the loyalty of his subjects.

PSALM XCIV.

ARGUMENT.

THE Psalmist, complaining of corrupt and troublous times, in the person of the church, 1—4, prayeth for the downfall of prosperous wickedness; 5, 6, he describeth the cruelty, and 7—11, reproveth the atheistical folly of those who persecute God's people; 12, 13, he extolleth the blessedness of the persecuted, if they are endued with faith and patience, inasmuch as, 14, 15, the divine promise and their future reward are certain; he, therefore, 16—19, throweth himself wholly upon God, whose mercies never fail, who, 20, 21, cannot be on the side of iniquity, but, 22, 23 will preserve his saints, and destroy their enemies.

1. *O* LORD *God, to whom vengeance belongeth, O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, show thyself.* 2. *Lift up thyself, thou judge of the earth; render a reward to the proud.*

The church, however unjustly oppressed and afflicted, remembereth that "vengeance belongeth" not to her, had she the power to inflict it, but "to God" only, who hath said, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay:" Rom. xii. 19. To him, therefore, she maketh her supplication, that he would manifest his glory in her salvation; that he would ascend the tribunal, as "judge of the earth," try her cause, and avenge her of her insolent and cruel prosecutors.

3. LORD, *how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph?* 4. *How long shall they utter* and *speak hard things?* and *all the workers of iniquity boast themselves?*

The "triumphs" of wickedness, the "hard speeches," taunts, and scoffs, of infidelity, against Christ, and all who belong to him, are a continual grief of heart to the faithful in the world, who desire nothing so much as to see the empire of sin at an end, and the kingdom of righteousness established. But for this great event they must wait with patience, until the time appointed by the Father, when the iniquities of the world, and the sufferings of the church, shall be full. "I saw under the altar," saith the well-beloved John, "the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them, and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also, and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled." Rev. vi. 9. &c.

5. *They break in pieces thy people, O* LORD, *and afflict thine heritage.* 6. *They slay the widow, and stranger, and murder the fatherless.*

Some instances of cruelty, exercised by the enemies against the "people and heritage" of God, are here specified. "Widows, strangers, and orphans," are destitute of the help and protection afforded by husbands, friends, and fathers. Christ has become an husband to the church, a father to her children, and the only friend to both in time of need. Else were we all in the state of strangers and orphans, exposed, with our widowed mother, to the unrelenting malice and fury of the great oppressor and murderer.

7. *Yet they say, the* LORD *shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard* it. 8. *Understand, ye brutish among the people; and* ye *fools, when will ye be wise?* 9. *He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?* 10. *He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not he correct? he that teacheth man knowledge,* shall not he know? or, *he that instructeth the nations, shall not he rebuke; even he that teacheth man knowledge?*

The Psalmist informeth us, that men are encouraged in their injustice and villany, by a persuasion, that God doth not behold or regard what they do to his people. The absurdity of such a conceit is shown from these considerations; that it is God who

bestoweth on man the powers of seeing and hearing, and therefore that he himself must needs be possessed of those powers in the highest perfection; that it is God who hath instructed the world, by his revelations, in religious knowledge, and consequently, without all doubt, he cannot be ignorant of the use and abuse which men make of that his unspeakable gift.

11. *The* LORD *knoweth the thoughts of man, that they* are *vanity.*

So far is God from being a stranger to the actions, that he is privy to the first "thoughts" of men, from whence those actions flow; he is acquainted with all their counsels against his church, and knoweth them to be as vain as the imagination that he is ignorant of them. The wicked can no more escape the hand, than they can elude the eye, of Heaven.

12. *Blessed* is *the man whom thou chastenest,* or, *instructest, O* LORD, *and teachest him out of thy law:* 13. *That thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked.*

Since, therefore, the schemes of the adversary are vain, and the counsel of Jehovah shall infallibly stand, happy is the man who, having learned, from the Scriptures of truth, the lessons of faith and patience, enjoys tranquillity of mind in time of trouble, while destruction is preparing for the impenitent. Then, when "the days of adversity" are over, shall pain and sorrow take a final leave of the righteous, to go and dwell with the wicked, to eternal ages. The former shall enter into the rest and joy of their Lord; the latter, into the fire prepared originally for the devil and his angels.

14. *For the* LORD *will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance.* 15. *But judgment shall return unto righteousness; and all the upright in heart shall follow it.*

The faith and patience of the saints are built upon the foundation of God's promise not to "cast off and forsake," however he may chasten and correct, his "people and inheritance." At a fit time, "judgment shall return to righteousness," which it might seem to have forsaken; iniquitous oppressors shall meet with the punishment they have deserved, and the faithful shall experience the promised redemption. For thus Dr. Hammond renders and expounds the last clause of the two verses under consideration—"and after this," i. e. after "judgment" shall have "returned to righteousness, all the upright in heart;" i. e. it shall be their time; they shall succeed and flourish. Such were those halcyon days enjoyed by the Jews, after the fall of Babylon, and their return to their own land; such those times of refreshment to the church Christian, when the Pagan persecutions were at an end, and the Roman empire became Christian. Far transcendent is the felicity of a soul when it exchanges the miseries of the world for the delights of paradise, there to wait, with its sister spirits, until the bodies of saints shall pass from the dishonors of the grave to the glories of immortality.

16. *Who will rise up for me against the evil doers?* or, *who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?* 17. *Unless the* LORD had been *my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence.*

But in the mean season, while "evil doers" are permitted to prosper, and "the workers of iniquity" carry on their designs, the prophet asks in the person of the church, who is there that will or can protect, defend, and deliver? The answer is, God only can do it: "Unless the Lord had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence," or, I had almost been in the state of death. How often have our spiritual enemies arisen against us, threatening to bring us into a state of eternal death, but the Lord Jesus was our help and our salvation!

18. *When I said, My foot slippeth: thy mercy, O* LORD, *held me up.*

When the child of God, walking in the slippery paths of life, findeth himself falling into temptation, if he confesseth his inability to stand his ground, and crieth out, like Peter on the water, to his heavenly Father, "Lord, save me, I perish;" a merciful, gracious, and powerful hand will immediately be stretched out, to support his steps, and establish his goings.

19. *In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul.*

The excellent Norris, in a masterly sermon on this verse, has given us the following elegant and affecting paraphrase of it: "When my mind sallies out into a multitude of thoughts, and those thoughts make me sad and heavy, anxious and solicitous, as presenting to my view my own weakness and infirmity, and the universal vanity of all those seeming props and stays, upon which my deluded soul was apt to lean; the many great calamities of life, and the much greater terrors of death; the known miseries of the present state, and the darkness and uncertainty of the future; still urging me with fresh arguments of sorrow, and opening new and new scenes of melancholy, till my soul begins to faint and sink under the burthen she has laid upon herself; when I am thus thoughtful,

and thus sorrowful, then it is, O my God, that I feel the relief of thy divine refreshments; I find myself supported and borne up by the strong tide of thy consolations, which raise my drooping head, strike a light into my soul, and make me not only dismiss, but even forget, that sorrow and melancholy, which my thoughtfulness had brought upon me." Who that reads this, will not thankfully take and follow the advice offered in another part of the same discourse? "Whenever, therefore, thoughts arise in thy heart, and troubles from those thoughts, when thy mind is dark and cloudy, and all the regions of the soul are overcast; then betake thyself to thy oratory, either to thy closet, or the church, and there entertain thy soul with the pleasures of religion, and the satisfactions of a clear conscience." See Norris's Practical Discourses, vol. iii. ser. 4.

20. *Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law?*

One consideration which affordeth comfort to the faithful under persecution and affliction, is this, that God can never be on the side of oppression and injustice, though, to answer wise and salutary purposes, he may, for a time, suffer them to have the dominion, and to establish iniquity by law. A distinction there certainly must be between right and wrong; and the former must as certainly triumph at the last day.

21. *They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood.*

Righteousness and innocence are most atrocious crimes, in the eyes of wickedness and guilt. For these crimes Cain slew his brother Abel, the Jews crucified Christ, the Pagans tortured and murdered his disciples, and bad men in all ages have persecuted the good. "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you." 1 John, iii. 13.

22. *But the* LORD *is my defence: and my God is the rock of my refuge.* 23. *And he shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness; yea, the* LORD *our God shall cut them off.*

Jehovah is our "defence;" we fear not the fiery darts of the enemy; He is "the rock of our refuge;" we bid defiance to the rage and malice of earth and hell. Armed with the shield of faith, and the sword of the Spirit, we rise superior to every effort of diabolical malice and secular power; waiting, in patience and hope, for the coming of that day, when He who hateth unrighteousness, and with whom the throne of iniquity can have no fellowship, shall visit the wickedness of the wicked upon them; when the world of the ungodly shall share the fate of apostate Jerusalem, and the righteous shall be glorified with their Lord and Saviour.

NINETEENTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM XCV.

ARGUMENT.

THIS Psalm hath been long used in the Christian church, as a proper introduction to her holy services. It containeth, 1, 2, an exhortation to praise Jehovah, 3, for his greatness, 4, 5, and for his works of creation; 6, men are invited to worship him as their Maker, and, 7, as their Preserver: 8—11, they are warned against tempting and provoking him, by the example of the Israelites in the wilderness. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews hath taught us to consider the Psalm as an address to believers under the Gospel.

1. *O come, let us sing unto the* LORD: *let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.*

In this first verse, Christians now exhort and stir up each other, as the Jews did of old, to employ their voices in honor of Jehovah, to celebrate "the rock of their salvation." Jesus, by redeeming us from our enemies, hath opened our lips, and our mouths ought, therefore, to show forth his praise. He is the Rock of ages, in which is opened a fountain for sin and uncleanness; the Rock which attends the church in the wilderness, pouring forth the water of life for her use and comfort; the Rock which is our fortress against every enemy, shadowing and refreshing a weary land. "O come, then, let us sing unto this our LORD; let us make a joyful noise unto this rock of our salvation."

2. *Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.*

The "presence" of Jehovah dwelt formerly between the cherubim, in a tabernacle, or temple, made with hands, whither the Israelites were to resort, until God became manifest in the flesh. After that time, the divine presence left the synagogue, and removed into the Christian church; by her we are now invited to "come before that presence with thanksgiving," and, while we "make a joyful noise," by chanting these divine "Psalms," to imitate, in some measure, the heavenly choirs, who "rest not," from their blessed employment of praising God, "day or night." Rev. iv. 8.

3. *For the* LORD *is a great God, and a great King above all gods.*

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It is not without reason, that we are exhorted to give thanks and praise unto our God and King; for he is "worthy to receive glory and blessing:" Rev. v. 12, he is a God above all that are called by that name; above those deities, which were once worshipped by the ancient Heathen; above the world, which still continues to be an object of adoration among infatuated mortals. His throne is over all, and power and dominion are his.

4. *In his hand* are *the deep places of the earth; the strength of the hills is his also.* 5. *The sea is his, and he made it; and his hands formed the dry* land.

The treasures, which lie hid in the "deep places" of the earth beneath; the majestic pride and "strength of the hills," which tower above, and lift up their heads to heaven; the unnumbered waves of the great and wide "sea," which roll in perpetual motion round the world; the rich and variegated produce of the "dry land," crowned with verdure and beauty; together with every thing that liveth in the waters, or on the earth; all are under the government of our God; by him were all things created; by him have all things been redeemed.

6. *O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the* LORD *our Maker.*

As in the beginning of the Psalm we were called upon to "praise" Jehovah, so here we are invited to humble ourselves before him in "prayer." From him we had our being; him, therefore, we are to supplicate for every other blessing, both in this life, and that which is to come. And since he made our bodies, as well as our souls, it is meet and right that they should bear their part in his service, and that internal worship should be accompanied and signified by that which is external.

7. *For he is our God, and we* are *the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.*

An additional reason why we should both praise Jehovah, and pray to him, is the peculiar relation into which he hath been pleased to put himself by the convenant of grace: "he is our GOD;" we are the objects of his tender care and unspeakable love; we are his "people," and his "sheep;" his chosen flock, which he hath purchased with his blood, which he feeds with his word, and refreshes with his Spirit, in fair and pleasant pastures. From those pastures, O thou good Shepherd! suffer us not to stray; or, if we do stray, bring us speedily back again, by any means which thou, in thine infinite wisdom, shalt think fit. Wholesome is the discipline which drives us into the fold, and keeps us there.

8. *To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation,* and *as in the day of temptation in the wilderness.* 9. *When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work.*

The first clauses of these two verses may be joined to the preceding verse, thus, "He is our God, we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand, if ye will hear his voice to-day;" that is, if ye will be his obedient people, he will continue to be your God. Or else the word ם, translated "if," may be rendered in the optative form. "O that you would hear his voice to-day," saying unto you, "Harden not," &c. However this be, what follows to the end of the Psalm is undoudtedly spoken in the person of God himself, who may be considered as addressing us, in these latter days, by the Gospel of his Son; for so the apostle teaches us to apply the whole passage, Heb. iii. iv. The Israelites, when they came out of Egypt, had a day of probation, and a promised rest to succeed it; but, by unbelief and disobedience, they to whom it was promised, that is, the generation of those who came out of Egypt, fell short of it, and died in the wilderness. The Gospel, in like manner, offers, both to Jew and Gentile, another day of probation in this world, and another promised rest to succeed it, which remaineth for the people of God, in heaven. All whom it concerns are, therefore, exhorted to beware lest they forfeit the second rest, as murmuring and rebellious Israel came short of the first. The verses now before us allude to what passed at the place called "Massah," and "Meribah," from the people there "tempting" and striving with their God, notwithstanding all the mighty works which he had wrought for them, before their eyes. Exod. xvii. 7.

10. *Forty years long was I grieved,* or, *disgusted, with* this *generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their hearts, and they have not known my ways.*

O the desperate presumption of man, that he should offend his Maker "forty years!" O the patience and long suffering of his Maker, that he should allow him forty years to offend in! Sin begins in the "heart," by its desires "wandering" and going astray after forbidden objects; whence follows inattention to the "ways" of God; to his dispensations, and our own duty. Lust in the heart, like vapor in the stomach, soon affects the head, and clouds the understanding.

11. *Unto whom I sware in my wrath, that they should not enter into my rest.*

Exclusion from Canaan was the punishment of Israelitish contumacy; exclusion from heaven is to be the punishment of disobedience among Christians. To take vengeance on those who reject the Gospel terms, is no less a part of the covenant and oath of God, than

it is to save and glorify those who accept them. Yet men continue deliberately to commit those sins, which the Almighty standeth thus engaged to punish with destruction!* "Take heed," therefore, "brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end; while it is said, To day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation. For some, when they had heard, did provoke; howbeit, not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. But with whom was he grieved forty years? Was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcases fell in the wilderness? And to whom sware he, that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being made us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the Gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." Heb. iii. 12, &c.

PSALM XCVI.

ARGUMENT.

BY common consent of Jews and Christians, we apply this Psalm to the times of Messiah. 1—4, Men are exhorted to sing his praises; to declare his salvation; 4, 5, to acknowledge his supremacy over the gods of the nations, with, 6, the glory and beauty of his sanctuary; 7—9, to give him the honor, the worship, and the obedience due unto him, and, 10, to publish the glad tidings of his kingdom being established: 11—13, the whole creation is called upon to rejoice at this great event. We find, by 1 Chron. xvi. that David delivered out this Psalm, to be sung on occasion of temporal blessings prefigurative of future spiritual ones.

1. *O sing unto the* LORD *a new song; sing unto the* LORD, *all the earth.*

* Sensus hujus loci ex Paulo sic concinnandus: nempe requiem a Deo Israelitis esse promissam in terra Chananæa: omnes tamen interim in deserto cecidisse hac requie frustratos: quare Spiritum Sanctum per Davidem ad novam requiem invitasse; ad novum illud sabbatum ab ipso mundi exordio diei septimæ requie figuratum, novumque indixisse diem quo sub Christo, in Ecclesia, ac cœlesti patria quiesceremus, nisi essemus increduli; unde sic concludit Paulus: "Festinemus ingredi in illam requiem." BOSSUET.

Jehovah, our Redeemer, is the person whose praises are to be sung. They are to be sung in a "new" song; a song calculated to celebrate new mercies, prefigured by old ones wrought for Israel in former times; a song fit for the voices of renewed and regenerate men to sing in the new Jerusalem, in those new heavens and that new earth, which constitute the new creation, or kingdom of Jesus Christ. And as the mercies of God are universal, extending themselves not only to the Jews, but to all the nations of the earth, all the nations of the earth are therefore exhorted to bear a part in this new song: "Sing unto the LORD a new song; sing unto the LORD, all the earth." Thus St. John, after reckoning up the 144000, or full number of those who were sealed to salvation from among the tribes of Israel, proceeds to tell us, that he "beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." All these sung a new song, which none could learn but the redeemed; they "cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb." See Rev. v. vii. xiv.

2. *Sing unto the* LORD, *bless his name; show forth his salvation from day to day.*

Again are we excited to sing unto the Lord Jesus, and in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, to bless his saving NAME. The latter clause of the verse is very expressive in the original, בשרו "preach," or, "evangelize his salvation from day to day;" let it be the constant theme of all your discourses; publish it to the world in every possible way, by your words, and by your actions; and while God allows you breath and life, let one day transmit the glorious employment to another, until it be resumed and continued in heaven to all eternity.

3. *Declare his glory among the heathen; his wonders among all people.*

The "glory" of Messiah in his incarnation, his life, his death, resurrection, ascension, and kingdom, the "wonders" or miracles by him wrought upon the bodies and souls of men; these were the things "declared among the heathen," even "among all people," by the apostles and their successors; these things are still declared, by the Scriptures read, and sermons preached in the church, which was gathered originally from among the Gentiles.

4. *For the* LORD *is great, and greatly to be praised; he is to be feared above all gods.* 5. *For all the gods of the nations* are *idols*, or, *things of nought; but the* LORD *made the heavens.*

Christ is to be celebrated, his glory and

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wonders are to be declared, because he is, in every possible sense, "great;" great in dignity, in power, in mercy; and therefore "greatly to be praised" by every creature. The heavens and heavenly bodies, adored by the nations, were no gods, but the works of "his" hands, who had fixed his everlasting throne high above them all. At the publication of the Gospel, idolatry fell before it; and what is the world itself but one great idol, which is to fall and disappear in like manner?

6. *Honor and majesty* are *before him; strength and beauty* are *in his sanctuary.*

What are the splendor and magnificence of earthly courts, when compared with that glory and majesty, the unutterable brightness of which fills the court of the heavenly King? Some portion of this celestial light is communicated, through grace, to the Christian church, which is described by St. John, under images borrowed from the figurative sanctuary, and the eathly Jerusalem, as an edifice composed of gold and precious stones, illuminated by the glory of God and the Lamb residing in the midst of it. See Rev. xxi.

7. *Give unto the* LORD, *O ye kindreds,* or, *families,* or, *tribes, of the people, give unto the* LORD *glory and strength.* 8. *Give unto the* LORD *the glory* due unto *his name; bring an offering and come into his courts.* 9. *O worship the* LORD *in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth.*

In these three verses, the tribes of the spiritual Israel are enjoined to ascribe to their Redeemer all "glory and strength," as essentially inherent in him, and by him communicated to his people; to give him the entire "glory of his name," and of that "salvation" imported by it; to bring the "sacrifices" of the new law, and to assemble in the "courts" of his house; to worship him in that "beauty of holiness" which is constituted by the regular and solemn services of the church; to "fear" and obey him, as the subjects of a King invested with plenitude of power in heaven and earth.

10. *Say among the heathen, that the* LORD *reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: he shall judge the people righteously.*

In other words—Make proclamation, therefore, O ye apostles and preachers of the Gospel, that a new and eternal kingdom is erected; the usurped empire of Satan is overthrown, and the Lord Jesus, having redeemed mankind, reigneth in the hearts of his people by faith; a community is formed, not upon the plan of secular policy, but upon the divine principle of heavenly love; it is established on immoveable foundations, nor shall the gates of hell prevail against it; righteousness shall dwell in it, since He, who is the King of Righteousness, presides, directs, and determines all things, by his Word, and his Spirit.

11. *Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof:* 12. *Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord.*

Transported with a view of these grand events, and beholding in spirit the advent of King Messiah, the Psalmist exults in most jubilant and triumphant strains, calling the whole creation to break forth into joy, and to celebrate the glories of redemption. The heavens, with the innumerable orbs fixed in them, which, while they roll and shine, declare the glory of beatified saints; the earth, which, made fertile by celestial influences, showeth the work of grace on the hearts of men here below; the field, which, crowned with a produce of an hundred fold, displayeth an emblem of the fruit yielded by the seed of the Word in the church; the trees of the wood, lofty, verdant, and diffuse, apt representatives of holy persons, those "trees of righteousness, the "planting of Jehovah," Isa. lxi. 3. whose examples are eminent, fair, and extensive; all these are, by the prophet, excited to join in a chorus of thanksgiving to the Maker and Redeemer of the world.

13. *For he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth; he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.*

The coming of Christ is twofold; first he came to sanctify the creature, and he will come again to glorify it. Either of his kingdoms, that of grace, or that of glory, may be signified by his "judging the world in righteousness and truth." If creation be represented as rejoicing at the establishment of the former, how much greater will the joy be at the approach of the latter; seeing that, notwithstanding Christ be long since come in the flesh, though he be ascended into heaven, and have sent the Spirit from thence, yet "the whole creation," as the apostle speaks, Rom. viii. 22. "groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, expecting to be delivered, from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body;" when at the renovation of all things, man, new made, shall return to the days of his youth,

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to begin an immortal spring, and be for ever young

PSALM XCVII.

ARGUMENT.

IN this Psalm, 1, the reign of Christ is again celebrated, and the nations are again called to rejoice on that account: 2—7, He is described as taking vengeance on his enemies, overthrowing idolatry in the Heathen world, commanding adoration from all creatures, and, 8, 9, inspiring gladness into the church, by subduing her enemies: 10—12, The duties of holiness, thankfulness, and religious joy, are inculcated.

1. *The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof.*

Triumphant over death and hell, the Lord Jesus is gone up on high, and "reigneth." What greater cause can the whole earth have to "rejoice;" yea, even the most distant isles of the Gentiles, to "be glad," and to sing for joy; since they are all become his subjects, and share the unspeakable blessings of so gracious a reign? We Britons, as inhabiting one of those Heathen isles, and enjoying so fair a portion of evangelical blessings, have reason to repeat this verse, with a particular pleasure and energy. The Hebrews called by the name of "isles," אִיִּים, not only countries surrounded by the sea, but all the countries which the sea divided from them; so that the term became synonymous with "Gentiles." Thus, it is said, Isa. xlii. 4. "The ISLES shall wait for his law;" which passage, Matt. xii. 21. is expounded as follows: "In him shall the GENTILES trust."

2. *Clouds and darkness* are *round about him; righteousness and judgment* are *the habitation*, or, *establishment, of his throne.*

When the mercy and grace of our heavenly King are to be described, he is likened to the sun shining in a clear firmament, and gladdening universal nature with his beneficent rays. But when we are to conceive an idea of him, as going forth, in "justice and judgment," to discomfit and punish his adversaries, the imagery is then borrowed from a troubled sky; he is pictured as surrounded by "clouds and darkness;" from whence issue lightnings, and thunders, storms and tempests, affrighting and confounding the wicked and impenitent.

3. *A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about.* 4. *His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw and trembled.* 5. *The hills melted like wax at the presence of the* LORD; *at the presence of the* LORD *of the whole earth.*

The judgments of God, and their effects upon the world, are here set forth, under the usual similitude of lightning and fire from heaven, causing the earth to tremble, and the mountains to melt and dissolve away. The exaltation of Christ to the throne of his kingdom, was followed by a dreadful display of that vengeance which broke in pieces the Jewish nation, and brought their civil and religious polity to an utter dissolution. In the history of their destruction, the world of the ungodly may view a striking picture of the great and terrible day, when the Lord Jesus shall render a recompense to all his enemies. He is then to descend in flaming fire; lightnings shall be his harbingers; the earth shall tremble; and the hills shall, literally, "melt like wax at the presence of Jehovah."

6. *The heavens declare his righteousness; and all the people see his glory.*

"The heavens," by the manifestation of vengeance from thence, reveal, "declare," and proclaim the "righteous" judgments of Messiah; and "all the people" upon earth are witnesses of the "glory" of his victory over every thing that opposeth itself to the establishment of his kingdom. This will be more eminently the case at the second advent, when the trumpet of the archangel shall proclaim his approach in the clouds of heaven, and all the tribes of the earth shall see him coming in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels.

7. *Confounded be*, or, *shall be, all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship him, all* ye *gods.*

When Jesus was exalted, his Gospel published, and his power and glory made known in the Heathen world, men grew "ashamed" of their "images, and boasted themselves in their idols" no more. The last clause of our verse, "Worship him, all ye gods," declares the supremacy of Christ over all that are called gods, אֱלֹהִים, in heaven and in earth, who are enjoined to pay adoration unto him, instead of claiming it for themselves.

8. *Sion heard, and was glad: and the daughters of Judah rejoiced, because of thy judgments, O* LORD. 9. *For thou,* LORD, *art high above all the earth: thou art exalted far above all gods.*

The inhabitants of the new "Sion," or the people of God, "heard" the tidings, that idols and idolatry were fallen, and the Lord Jesus reigned triumphant; they heard, and "were" glad; the "daughters of Judah," or Christian churches, "rejoiced" in the Holy Ghost, with joy unspeakable, "because of these judg-

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ments" of their God upon his enemies, whereby he evinced himself superior to the powers of the earth, and the gods of the nations. Thus, at the fall of Babylon, it is said, Rev. xviii. 20. "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets, for God hath avenged you on her." And Eusebius speaks, in the following terms, of the times under Constantine, which succeeded the overthrow of Maxentius and Maximin: "A brigh' and glorious day, no cloud overshadowing it, did enlighten, with rays of heavenly light, the Churches of Christ over all the earth;—and among all Christians there was an inexpressible joy, and a kind of celestial gladness." Ecclesiast. Hist. b. x.

10. *Ye that love the* LORD, *hate evil: he preserveth the soul of his saints, he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked.*

Having sung the glory of the Redeemer, the Psalmist delineates the duty of the redeemed. They are characterized by their "love of God;" they are enjoined to "hate evil;" this hatred is, indeed, a consequence, and a sure proof, of that love, when it is genuine and sincere. Religion must be rooted in the heart, and spring from thence. A Christian must not only serve God outwardly, but must inwardly "love" him; he must not content himself with abstaining from overt acts of sin, but must truly "hate" it. They who do so, are "the saints of God, whose souls he preserveth" from evil, and will finally "deliver" from the evil one, and his associates, by a happy death, and a glorious resurrection.

11. *Light is sown for the righteous; and gladness for the upright in heart.*

However gloomy our prospect may at any time be, let us wait patiently, as the husbandman doth, all the winter, in expectation of a future crop, from the seed which lieth buried in the earth. "Light and gladness are sown for the righteous and true hearted," though they may not yet appear; the seed-time is in this world; the harvest will be in that to come. "In due season we shall reap, if we faint not." Gal. vi. 9.

12. *Rejoice in the* LORD, *ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.*

Tribulation itself, therefore, should not prevent our "rejoicing in Jehovah our righteousness," who justifieth us from our sins; no adversity ought to make us negligent in celebrating, with thanksgiving, the "commemorations of his holiness," which the church hath appointed to be observed; to the end that we may always remember, with gratitude, how great things he hath done for us already, and reflect, with comfort, on those much greater things which he hath promised to do for us hereafter.

NINETEENTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM XCVIII.

ARGUMENT.

In this evangelical hymn, the prophet, 1—3, extols the miracles, the victory, the salvation, the righteousness, the mercy, and the truth of the Redeemer; on account of which, 4—9, he calls upon man, and the whole creation, to rejoice and praise Jehovah.

1. *O sing unto the* LORD *a new song, for he hath done marvellous things; his right hand and his holy arm hath gotten him the victory.*

New mercies and wonders demand new songs. And what mercies, what wonders, can be compared with those wrought by the holy Jesus? "Go and tell John," saith he to John's disciples; go and tell all the world, saith he to his own disciples, "the things which ye see and hear;" the marvellous things which I do to the bodies and to the souls of men. "The blind receive their sight," and the ignorant minds are enlightened with knowledge; "the lame walk," and strength is communicated to impotent souls; "the lepers are cleansed," and the lascivious rendered chaste; "the deaf hear," and the obstinate listen to instruction and reproof; "the dead are raised," and sinners justified; "the Gospel is preached," and the world converted. "His own right hand, and his holy arm" hath done these marvellous things, without and against all worldly power; not by spear and sword, but by patience and charity, he hath "gotten the victory," and gained the glorious day.

2. *The* LORD *hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly showed in the sight of the heathen.*

The "salvation" of Jehovah was "made known" by the preaching of Christ himself in Judea, for the space of three years; his "righteousness," whereby sinners are justified, was "openly showed," by the sermons of his apostles, "in the sight of the heathen." Still let that salvation be made known, still let that righteousness be openly showed, by the ministers of the Gospel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and the remnant of the Jews converted; until antichrist be overthrown, and death himself fallen before the all-conquering cross.

3. *He hath remembered his mercy and truth towards the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.*

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In sending the Messiah, God showed himself mindful of the promises, which "mercy" prompted him to make, and "truth" required him to perform. These promises were made to "the house of Israel;" to the lost sheep of that house, Christ declared himself sent; and the apostles offered salvation first to the Jews: but to them it was never intended that evangelical blessings should be confined. The prophets spake in plain terms of the call of the Gentiles, who were to be adopted into the holy family, and made the children of Abraham. The Gospel was accordingly preached to the nations, the apostles made their progress through the world, and "all the ends of the earth saw the salvation of God." The Jews fell from the faith of their fathers, and, to this day, continue in their apostasy. And are not the Gentiles, in their turn, falling away, after the same example of unbelief? "Remember," yet once again, O Lord, thy "mercy and truth toward the house of Israel;" yet once again let "all the ends of the earth see thy salvation."

4. *Make a joyful noise unto the* LORD, *all the earth; make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise.* 5. *Sing unto the* LORD *with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm.* 6. *With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the* LORD *the King.*

The Psalmist, beholding in spirit the accomplishment of the promises, the advent of Christ, and the glory of his kingdom, thinks it criminal in any creature to be silent; he bids the whole earth break forth into joy, and exult in God our Saviour, with every token of gratitude and thankfulness; with voices, and instruments of all kinds, in perfect harmony, with tempers and affections according in like manner, men are enjoined to sound aloud the praises of their great Redeemer.

7. *Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.* 8. *Let the floods clap* their *hands, let the hills be joyful together,* 9. *Before the* LORD; *for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity,*

The inanimate parts of creation are called upon to bear their parts in the new song, and to fill up the universal chorus of praise and thanksgiving, in honor of him that sitteth upon the throne. Or, perhaps, the converted Heathen nation are intended under the figures of the "sea," the "rivers," and the "hills," and their exultations expressed by the noise of many waters, their beauty and fruitfulness by those of the hills, when, crowned with plenty, they, as it were, laugh and sing, at the approach of harvest. The subject of this general joy is, as before, in Psal. xcvi. 13, the advent of Messiah to reform the world, to execute judgment upon the wicked, and to establish a kingdom of righteousness upon the earth. We expect his second advent to restore all things, to judge the world, to condemn his enemies, and to begin his "glorious" reign. Then shall heaven and earth rejoice, and the joy of the redeemed shall be full.

PSALM XCIX.

ARGUMENT.

UNDER images borrowed from the old dispensation, the prophet celebrates, 1, the reign of Messiah, and the submission of his enemies; 2—4, his exaltation, holiness, power, and justice; which, 5, men are exhorted to acknowledge and adore. 6—9, The examples of Moses, Aaron, and Samuel are introduced, to encourage us in worshipping and serving our God and Saviour.

1. *The* LORD *reigneth, let the people tremble: he sitteth* between *the cherubims; let the earth be moved,* or, *bow.*

Jehovah reigneth in the Christian church, as he did of old in the Jewish temple; when he appeared between the cherubims in the holy of holies, in the form and likeness of a MAN, encompassed with "glory:" Ezek. i. 26. Numb. vii. 89, he subdued the enemies of Israel, when they raged most furiously against his people; he will also bring into subjection the adversaries of the Gospel, and finally render us victorious over the powers of darkness. The passions and affections may mutiny and rebel; but if Christ reign in the heart by faith, they must soon tremble and submit.

2. *The* LORD *is great in Sion, and he* is *high above all people.* 3. *Let them praise thy great and terrible name:* for *it* is *holy*

The power and pre-eminence of the Redeemer, whom no creature is able to resist, are reasons why all should save themselves, by yielding in time to his sceptre; by taking the benefit of his protection, instead of incurring his displeasure; by "praising his great, terrible, and holy name," instead of suffering the almighty vengeance, which he, who owns that Name, can inflict.

4. *The King's strength also loveth judgment; thou dost establish equity, thou executest judgment and righteousness in Jacob.* 5. *Exalt ye the* LORD *our God, and worship at his footstool:* for *he* is *holy.*

For although the "strength" of our King be infinite, yet it is never exerted, but

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in "righteousness" and just "judgment," which are his delight; they compose the firm basis of his throne, and direct his whole administration. Impenitent rebels must feel the weight of his arm, and none can accuse the justice of their punishment: but in all other cases, he is "mighty only to save:" Isa. lxiii. 1. This holiness of his proceedings, this due temperament of justice with mercy, the redeemed are exhorted to acknowledge and to proclaim, falling down before the throne, and uttering the angelical trisagion, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."

6. *Moses and Aaron among his priests*, or, *chief rulers, and Samuel among them that call upon his name; they called upon the* LORD, *and he answered them.* 7. *He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar: they kept his testimonies, and the ordinance* that *he gave them.*

To encourage the faithful in the worship of God, the examples of Moses, Aaron, and Samuel are adduced, men of like infirmities with ourselves, whose prayers were heard, both for themselves and others, and answers were returned to them from the mystic "cloud," that symbol of the divine presence, which, for a while, was itinerant with the camp in the wilderness, and then became fixed in the tabernacle at Shiloh, till its last removal to Mount Sion. These men were heard through the intercession of the great Mediator, whom they represented. Through that same intercession, our prayers also are heard, if we keep his testimonies, and the ordinances that he hath given us.

8. *Thou answeredst them, O* LORD *our God: thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions.*

The construction of the verse seems to be this: "O Lord our God, thou didst hear, or answer them," that is, the afore-mentioned typical mediators, Moses, Aaron, aud Samuel; "thou becamest a forbearing God for them," or, at their intercession; and that, "even when punishing," or, when thou hadst begun to punish, "the wicked deeds of them," that is, not of Moses, Aaron, and Samuel, but of the people, who had transgressed, and for whom they interceded. This was the case, when Moses interceded for the idolaters; Exod. xxxii. 32. Aaron for the schismatics; Numb. xvi. 47, and Samuel for the whole nation; 1 Sam. vii. 9. "Pray one for another," saith an apostle to Christians, "that ye may be healed: the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James, v. 16.

9. *Exalt the* LORD *our God, and worship at his holy hill: for the* LORD *our God is holy.*

The Psalmist repeats his exhortation, enforced by the preceding examples of Moses, Aaron, and Samuel, and again invites all people to worship a "holy" God in a "holy" place, and to adore the consummate rectitude of all his proceedings, singing, with the spirits above, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." Rev. xv. 3.

PSALM C.

ARGUMENT.

THE Psalmist invites all the world to join with the Israelites in the service of him who was kind and gracious to them beyond expression. Accordingly, we Christians now properly use this Psalm in acknowledgment of God's wonderful love to us in Christ; by whom we offer up continually spiritual sacrifices, for redeeming us by the sacrifice which he made of himself; for making the world anew, and creating us again unto good works; according to his faithful promises, which we may depend upon for ever. PATRICK.

1. *Make a joyful noise unto the* LORD, *all ye lands:* 2. *Serve the* LORD *with gladness: come before his presence with singing.*

The prophet addresseth himself to "all lands," or to "all the earth;" to Gentiles, as well as Jews. He exhorteth them to "make a joyful noise," a noise like that of the trumpets at the time of jubilee, a sound of universal triumph and exultation, in honor of "Jehovah," now become their Lord and Saviour. The service of this our Master is perfect freedom; it is a service of love, a freedom from Pharaoh and the task-masters, from Satan and our own imperious lusts; it is a redemption from the most cruel bondage, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Let us therefore do as we are commanded; let us "serve the Lord with gladness;" and when we come "before his presence" in the temple, let it be "with singing" to the praise and glory of our Redeemer. Thus he is served in heaven, and thus he de ighteth to be served on earth.

3. *Know ye that the* LORD *he is God*, it is *he* that *hath made us, and not we ourselves;* we are *his people, and the sheep of his pasture.* Or, *He hath made us, and we are his,* his people, and the sheep of his pasture.*

The motives here urged for serving and praising Jehovah, are the same with those

* "I am persuaded that the Masoretical correction ולו (and we are *his*) is right: the construction and parallelism both favor it." Bishop LOWTH. A correspondent suggests—Might not the clause be rendered interrogatively—"Are not we his people, and the sheep of his pasture?"

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above, in Psal. xcv. 6, 7, namely, that he is our "God," engaged by covenant on our behalf; that his hands created us, and have since new created us; that we stand in the peculiar relation of his "people," whom he hath chosen to himself, and over whom he presideth as King; that we are "the sheep of his pasture," for whom the good Shepherd laid down his life, and whom he nourisheth, by the word and sacraments, unto eternal life. These are points which every Christian ought to "know" and believe, unto his soul's health. And whoever doth know them aright, will ever be ready with heart and voice to obey the injunction which followeth in the next verse.

4. *Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.*

The Christian church is a temple, whose "gates" stand continually open, for the admission of the nations from all the four quarters of the world. Rev. xxi. 13, 25. Into the "courts" of this temple, which are now truly "courts of the Gentiles," all men are invited to come, and offer their evangelical sacrifices of "confession and praise;" to express their gratitude to their Saviour, and "bless" his gracious and hallowed "name." How glorious will be that day, which shall behold the everlasting gates of heaven lifting up their heads, and disclosing to view those courts above, into which the children of the resurrection are to enter, there, with angels and archangels, to dwell and sing for evermore!

5. *For the* LORD *is good; his mercy is everlasting: and his truth* endureth *to all generations.*

"Jehovah is good;" he is the source of all beauty and perfection in the creature; how altogether lovely must he needs be in himself! "His mercy is "everlasting," extending through time into eternity; and "his truth," or fidelity in accomplishing his promises, "endureth to all generations," evidenced to the whole race of mankind, from Adam to his last born son. The Psalms which celebrate these attributes, will never, therefore, be out of date, but each successive generation will chant them with fresh propriety, and fresh delight, until by saints and angels they are sung new in the kingdom of God.

PSALM CI.

ARGUMENT.

IN the person of David, advanced to the throne of Israel, we hear King Messiah declaring how he intended to walk, and to govern his household the church; and also describing the qualifications which he should require in his ministers and servants.

1. *I will sing of mercy and judgment; unto thee, O* LORD, *will I sing.*

David, having determined to sing unto Jehovah, chooseth for his theme "mercy and judgment;" either that mercy which God had shown to him, and that judgment which had been inflicted on his enemies; or else, that upright administration of mercy and judgment, with which he himself intended to bless his people. The righteous administration of mercy and judgment in the kingdom of Messiah, is a topic on which his subjects always expatiate with pleasure and profit. His mercy encourageth the greatest of sinners to hope; his judgments forbid the best of men to presume.

2. *I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way: O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.*

In return for the favors of heaven, we hear the Israelitish monarch declaring his resolution, to set his court and kingdom an example of true wisdom, and unshaken integrity; at the same time, sighing for that visitation of divine grace, which alone could enable him to put his resolution in practice—"O when wilt thou come unto me?" This was ever the voice of the church, longing for the presence of God in human nature, "O when wilt thou come unto me?" And this must ever be the wish of a Christian, who knoweth that though in himself he be nothing, yet that he can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth him by his Spirit in the inner man. Messiah was the only King of Israel, whose life held forth to his subjects a pattern of wisdom and righteousness, and whose death procured them grace, in their different measures and degrees, to follow it.

3. *I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside, it shall not cleave to me.*

"I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes;" that is, I will not propose to myself, or think of carrying into execution, any iniquitous scheme of politics, however advantageous and tempting it may appear; I will turn away my eyes and my attention, and reject it at once: "I hate the work of them that turn aside;" of them who, in their counsels and their actions, deviate from the divine law to serve their own interest; "it shall not cleave to me;" no such corrupt principle shall adhere to my soul, or find a place in my affections. How noble a resolution for a king to make; but how difficult an one for a king to keep! Thou only, O King of Righteousness, didst never set any wicked thing before thine eyes; thou only hadst a perfect aversion to the ways of transgressors.

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4. *A froward heart shall depart from me: I will not know a wicked* person.

As is the king, so will be the court; as is the master of the house, such will be those of his household. David, having resolved to "walk within his house with a perfect," a sincere and upright "heart," determines at the same time to expel from thence all whose hearts were perverted and depraved: as he would "set no wicked thing before his eyes," so neither would he form any connections with "wicked persons;" they should not be of his acquaintance, much less should they be his favorites. In the same manner speaketh our heavenly King, with regard to the appointment of his ministers and servants—"I know you not, whence you are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity." Luke, xiii. 27.

5. *Whoso privily slandereth his neighbor, him will I cut off: him that hath an high look, and a proud,* or, *extended, and* therefore, *insatiable, heart, will not I suffer.*

Detraction, ambition, and avarice, are three weeds which spring and flourish in the rich soil of a court. The Psalmist declareth his resolution to undertake the difficult task of eradicating them, for the benefit of his people, that Israelites might not be harassed by informers, or oppressed by insolent and rapacious ministers. Shall we imagine these vices less odious in the eyes of that King, whose character was composed of humility and charity? or will Christ admit those tempers into the court of heaven, which David determined to exclude from his court upon earth?

6. *Mine eyes* shall be *upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me.*

The "eyes" of princes cannot be better employed, than in looking around them, in order to choose, from among their own subjects, fit and able men to transact the public business; men of inviolable "fidelity," and unshaken integrity; men who know how to think aright, and how to speak what they think; men likewise who "walk in the perfect way" of holiness, who do not disgrace their politics by their lives, or prejudice their master's cause by their sins, more than they can ever advance it by their abilities. Bishops may be called the "eyes" of Christ; they are to "overlook" his people, and we pray him at the seasons of ordination, "so to guide and govern their minds, that they may faithfully and wisely make choice of fit persons to serve in the sacred ministry of the church."

7. *He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.*

To purge a court of "deceit" and "falsehood," was a resolution worthy king David, worthy the representative of him, who styleth himself THE TRUTH, from whose heavenly palace and city will be for ever excluded, as St. John informeth us, "whosoever loveth and maketh A LIE." Rev. xxii. 15.

8. *I will early destroy all the wicked of the land: that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the* LORD.

Every earthly prince should consider himself as raised to a throne, and invested with power, "for the punishment of wickedness and vice, and the maintenance of God's true religion and virtue." "Early," therefore, in the "morning," of his reign, he should set about the work of reformation, that so the blessings of heaven may descend upon himself and his people, according to the infallible promises of the Most High. And let each individual, in like manner, and for the same reason, be zealous and diligent to reform his own heart and ways, ever mindful of that future most awful morning, when the King of Righteousness shall "cut off," with the sword of eternal judgment, "all wicked doers from that city of Jehovah," the new and heavenly Jerusalem.

TWENTIETH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM CII.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm is entitled, "A prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the Lord." It seems to have been written, during the captivity, by one of the prophets, who, like Daniel in parallel circumstances, 1, 2, maketh supplication before his God, 3—11, setteth forth, in the most affecting strains, his wretched and sorrowful estate, or rather, perhaps, that of Jerusalem, which he personates; 12, he comforteth himself, by reflecting on the eternity and immutability of Jehovah; 13—22, he predicteth and describeth the restoration of Sion, with her enlargement by the accession of the Gentiles, when Messiah shall have visited and redeemed her; 23, 24, he returneth again to his lamentations; but, 25—28, again reposeth his confidence on him who created all things, and who would not fail to make good his word and promise, if not to the generation then present, yet to their posterity. This is the fifth of those styled "Penitential Psalms;" and St. Paul, Heb. i. 10, hath asserted, that it is addressed to the eternal Son of God, and Saviour of the world.

1. *Hear my prayer, O* LORD, *and let my*

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it cut down, dried up, and withered. Such is the life of man, sojourning in the land of his captivity, and doing penance for his sins. But the eternity of Jehovah, the infallibility of his promises, and the remembrance of his former works and mercies, comfort our hearts, and encourage us to hope, nay, even to rejoice, in the midst of sorrow and tribulation.

13. *Thou shalt arise*, and *have mercy upon Sion; for the time to favor her, yea, the set time is come.* 14. *For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favor the dust thereof.*

From this passage, and what follows, it appears, that the suppliant, in this Psalm, bewails not only his own miseries, but those of the church. Israel was in captivity, and Sion a desolation. A "time" notwithstanding, a "set time," there was at hand, when God had promised to "arise, and to have mercy upon her." The bowels of her children yearned over her ruins; they longed to see her rebuilt, and were ready, whenever the word of command should be given, to set heart and hand to the blessed work. Such ought to be our affection towards our Sion, however afflicted and destitute she may, at any time, appear to be; such should be our faith in the promises of God concerning the future glorification of his church at the time appointed.

15. *So the heathen shall fear the name of the* LORD: *and all the kings of the earth thy glory.* 16. *When the* LORD *shall build up Sion, he shall appear in his glory.* 17. *He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.*

The object to which the prophets of old had chiefly respect, was not only the deliverance of Israel from Babylon, and the rebuilding of the material temple, but the salvation of sinners, and the erection of the Christian church, in the days of Messiah's kingdom. "When the Lord" Jesus thus "built up Sion, he appeared in his glory: the heathen feared his name, and all the kings of the earth" adored his majesty, because he had "regarded the prayer of the destitute" sons of Adam, in their worse than Babylonish captivity, and had arisen himself to be their Saviour and mighty Deliverer. We, in these latter days, look and pray for the second appearance of the same Redeemer, with power and great glory, to raise the dead, and to build up from the dust a Jerusalem which shall experience no more vicissitudes, but continue for ever in unchangeable beauty and brightness.

18. *This shall be written for the generation to come; and the people which shall be created shall praise the* LORD.

The history of "this" redemption and restoration by Messiah, thus foretold, hath been "written" in the Gospel for the benefit of "after generations," to the end that "the people who are created" anew in Christ Jesus, may from age to age praise Jehovah, in psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs; as it is done at this day in the church, and ever will continue to be done, till the choirs of heaven and earth shall be united before the throne of the Lamb.

19. *For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary: from heaven did the* LORD *behold the earth;* 20. *To hear the groaning of the prisoner, to loose those that are appointed to death:* 21. *To declare the name of the* LORD *in Sion, and his praise in Jerusalem;* 22. *When the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the* LORD.

Redemption is the subject of praise in the Christian church; and the process of that great work is here described by images borrowed from the temporal deliverance and restoration of Israel. God is represented as looking with an eye of pity from heaven upon poor mankind; as hearing the groans of sinners, fast bound in the chains of their sins, and sentenced to death eternal; as coming down to forgive and to release them; that, being so forgiven and released, they might cause the church to resound with his praises, when, upon the preaching of the Gospel, it should be filled with converts, assembled from every people and kingdom of the world. Look down, O Lord Jesu, yet once again upon thy servants, still under the dominion of death, and the bondage of corruption; loose these chains, even these also, O Lord, and bring us forth into the glorious liberty of thy children; that, with the whole assembly of the redeemed, in the heavenly Jerusalem, we may bless and praise thy name for ever and ever.

23. *He weakened my strength in the way; he shortened my days.*

The prophet, in the person of captive Sion, having, from verse 13 to verse 22, expressed his faith and hope in the promised redemption, now returns to his mournful complaints, as at verse 11. Israel doubteth not of God's veracity, but feareth lest his heavy hand should crush the generation then in being, before they should behold the expiration of their troubles. They were in "the way," but their "strength" was so "weakened," and their "days shortened," that they almost despaired of holding out to their journey's end. A sore trial hath the Christian church to undergo in the

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cry come unto thee. 2. *Hide not thy face from me in the day* when *I am in trouble; incline thine ear unto me: in the day* when *I call, answer me speedily.*

Sin and sorrow force "prayers" and "cries" from the sons of Adam. The first petition here preferred is, that these prayers and cries may be "heard" in heaven. The day of human life is "a day of trouble," a day of darkness and gloominess, which nothing can brighten, but the light of God's "countenance;" nothing can render comfortable, but a "speedy answer" of mercy and peace from above.

3. *For my days are consumed away like,* or, *in, smoke, and my bones are burnt as an hearth,* or, *a fire brand.*

The effects of extreme grief on the human frame are compared to those which fire produceth upon fuel. It exhausts the radical moisture, and, by so doing, soon consumes the substance. A man's time and his strength evaporate in melancholy, and his "bones," those pillars and supports of his body, become like wood, on which the fire hath done its work, and left it without sap, and without cohesion. A single penitent, or a whole church, bewailing their respective transgressions, when under the rod of God, may use these words, and will understand the force of them.

4. *My heart is smitten and withered like grass: so that I forget to eat my bread.*

The metaphor is continued, and the "heart" itself, out of which flow the streams of life, is represented as suffering that from grief, which the "grass" of the field suffers from the burning heat of the sun; it is "smitten, and withered." And when grief hath thus dejected the spirits, the man has no appetite for that food which is to recruit and elevate them. Ahab, smitten with one kind of grief, David with another, and Daniel with a third, all "forgot," or "refused, to eat their bread:" 1 Kings, xxi. 4. 2 Sam. xii. 16. Dan. x. 3. Such natural companions are "mourning and fasting."

5. *By reason of the voice of my groaning, my bones cleave to my skin.*

Extremity of sorrow causeth the flesh to waste, and the bones to press upon the skin, through which they are ready to force their way. Sickness is the chastisement of heaven, inflicted often upon us, to supply the want of that discipline, which we should exercise upon ourselves. "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." 1 Cor. xi. 31.

6. *I am like the pelican of the wilderness: I am like an owl,* or, *bittern, of the desert,* or, *of waste, ruinous places.* 7. *I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house-top.*

The sorrowful man is naturally desirous of retiring from the world, to vent his complaints in solitude, and to pass the nights in watchfulness and prayer. In such a situation the true penitent placeth himself, worthily to bewail his sins, and deprecate the judgments of his God. And in such a situation did captivity place the daughter of Sion, that she might do likewise. The use which Daniel made of it for this purpose, may be seen in his ixth chapter.

8. *Mine enemies reproach me all the day:* and *they that are mad against me, are sworn against me.*

The scoffs and reproaches of men are generally added to the chastisements of God; or rather, perhaps, are a part, and sometimes the bitterest part, of them. How the enemies of Jerusalem behaved, in the day of her calamitty, is well known. How carnal and ungodly men behave to a penitent, when mourning for his sins, under the afflicting hand of heaven, is as well known.

9. *For,* or, *Therefore, I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping.* 10. *Because of thine indignation and wrath; for thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down.*

By "eating ashes, and drinking tears," we may understand the same as if it had been said," "I have eaten the bread of humiliation, and drank the water of affliction;" ashes being the emblem of one, and tears the consequence of the other; while the actions of "eating and drinking" intimate to us the fulness and satiety which the sufferer had experienced of both, from the "wrath and indignation of God." Prosperity and adversity are from him; "he lifteth up, and he casteth down;" he lifted up Jerusalem above all the earth; and he cast her down, to be trodden under foot by the Gentiles.

11. *My days* are *like a shadow that declineth: and I am withered like grass.* 12. *But thou, O* LORD, *shalt endure for ever; and thy remembrance unto all generations.*

A "shadow" never continueth in one stay, but is still gliding imperceptibly on, lengthening as it goes, and at last vanisheth into darkness. The period of its existence is limited to a day at farthest. The rising sun gives it birth, and in that moment when the sun sets it is no more. The "grass" of the field, in like manner, hath a being of the same duration. In the morning, clothed with verdure and beauty, it refresheth and delighteth the eye of the beholder; but the evening findeth

last days, before the second advent of her Lord and Saviour. Strong faith and invincible patience will be necessary, to enable her to endure until the end shall come.

24. *And I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days: thy years* are *throughout all generations.*

Israel prayeth that the holy seed might not be extirpated, and perish by a kind of untimely death, ere yet the promise had been made good, and Sion had seen the salvation of her God. Every man hath reason to pray, that God would not "take him away in the midst of his days," or call upon him when unprepared; but that time may be allowed him to perfect his repentance, and to work out his salvation.

25. *Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens* are *the work of thy hands.* 26. *They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment, as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed.* 27. *But thou* art *the same, and thy years shall have no end.*

Amidst the changes and chances of this mortal life, one topic of consolation will ever remain, namely, the eternity and immutability of God our Saviour, of him who was, and is, and is to come. Kingdoms and empires may rise and fall; nay, the heavens and the earth, as they were originally produced and formed by the WORD of God, the Son, or second person in the Trinity, to whom the Psalmist here addresseth himself, see Heb. i. 10; so will they, at the day appointed, be folded up and laid aside, as an old and worn-out garment; or, if the substance remain, the present form and fashion of them will perish, and they will be utterly changed and altered from the state in which they now are. But Jehovah is ever the same; his years have no end, nor can his promise fail, any more than himself. "Heaven and earth," saith he, "shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away." Matt. xxiv. 35.

28. *The children of thy servants shall continue; and their seed shall be established before thee.*

Whatever be the fate of the present generation, whether they may live to see the accomplishment of all that has been foretold, or not, yet the word of God standeth sure; there shall be always a church, and a holy seed, to whom the promises shall be made good. They have already been fulfilled with regard to the advent of Messiah, and the vocation of the Gentiles. The events which are behind will be brought forward and come to pass in their seasons, until the counsel of God shall be finished, and every prediction receive its full accomplishment in the glorification of the redeemed.

PSALM CIII.

ARGUMENT.

IN this evangelical and most comfortable hymn, David, after, 1, 2, exciting himself to the work, 3—5, praiseth Jehovah for the mercies of redemption; 6, 7, celebrateth his goodness to Moses and Israel; 8—13, setteth forth the divine philanthropy, under various beautiful expressions and images; 14—16, describeth, in a manner wonderfully affecting, man's frail and perishable state; but, 17, 18, leadeth him, for consolation, to the everlasting mercy of God in Christ, the stability of whose throne and kingdom, 19, he declareth, and, 20—22, calleth upon heaven and earth to join with him in blessing and praising his holy name.

1. *Bless the* LORD, *O my soul; and all that is within me,* bless *his holy name.*

The Psalmist, about to utter a song of praise, first endeavors to awaken and stir up his "soul" to the joyful task. He calleth forth all his powers and faculties, "all that is within him," that every part of his frame may glorify its Saviour; that the understanding may know him, the will choose him, the affections delight in him, the heart believe in him, and the tongue confess him. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name."

2. *Bless the* LORD, *O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.*

Thanksgiving cannot be sincere and hearty, unless a man bear impressed upon his mind, at the time, a quick sense of "benefits" received; and "benefits" we are most of us apt to "forget;" those, especially, which are conferred upon us by God. Therefore David repeateth his self-awakening call, and summoneth all his powers of recollection, that none of the divine favors might continue unnoticed and unacknowledged. A catalogue of such particular mercies, temporal and spiritual, as each individual hath experienced through life, might be of service, to refresh the memory, upon this important head.

3. *Who forgiveth all thine iniquities: who healeth all thine infirmities.*

At the head of God's mercies must for ever stand "remission of sin," or that full and free pardon purchased for us by Jesus Christ, whereby, if we truly repent and believe in him, our transgressions, though

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ever so many, and ever so great, are done away, and become as if they had never been; from a state of gult we pass into one of justification, from a state of enmity into one of reconciliation, from a state of servitude into one of liberty and sonship. Next to the pardon of sin, considered as a crime, we are to commemorate the cure of it, considered as a disease, or indeed as a complication of diseases—"Who healeth all thine infirmities." The body experienceth the melancholy consequences of Adam's offence, and is subject to many "infirmities;" but the soul is subject to as many. What is pride, but lunacy; what is anger, but a fever; what is avarice, but a dropsy; what is lust, but a leprosy; what is sloth, but a dead palsy? Perhaps there are spiritual maladies similar to all corporeal ones. When Jesus Christ was upon earth, he proved himself the physician of men's souls, by the cures which he wrought upon their bodies. It is he alone who "forgiveth all our iniquities;" it is he alone who "healeth all our infirmities." And the person who findeth his sin "cured," hath a well-grounded assurance that it is "forgiven."

4. *Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth*, or, *encircleth, thee with loving kindness and tender mercies.*

Man hath two "lives;" he is, therefore, subject to a double "destruction;" and, consequently, capable of a twofold "redemption." He who is recovered from sickness, and thereby redeemed from that destruction which natural death bringeth upon the body, will undoubtedly sing this strain in transports of gratitude; and he ought so to do. But what will be the sensations of him who celebrates, in the same words, the spiritual redemption of his soul from death and destruction everlasting? How is he "crowned" with the "loving kindness" of Jehovah; how is he "encircled" by the arms of "mercy!" "Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honor:" never ending "length of days;" true "riches," that abide for ever; and "the honor which cometh from God only."

5. *Who satisfieth thy mouth with good* things; so that *thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.*

It is God who giveth us the "good things" of this world, and who giveth us likewise an appetite and a taste to enjoy them. It is God who restoreth a body, emaciated by sickness, to bloom, vigor, and agility. And he doth greater things than these. He "satisfieth" all the desires of the soul with a banquet of spiritual dainties, and bestoweth on her a relish for the same. By the renovating power of his Spirit, he restoreth her from decrepitude, to the health and strength of a young "eagle,"* so that she can ascend up on high, and contemplate the splendor of the Sun of Righteousness. Thus, at the day of the resurrection, clothed anew with salvation and glory, the body likewise shall arise from earth, and fly away as an eagle toward heaven, to begin an immortal life, and be for ever young.

6. *The* LORD *executed righteousness and judgment for all* that are *oppressed.* 7. *He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel.*

From a consideration of his own particular case, the Psalmist maketh a general reflection on that attribute of God, which inclineth him to deliver his people, and to punish their oppressors, of what kind soever they be. And here that grand display of the "ways" and "works" of Jehovah, the redemption of "Israel" by the hand of "Moses," immediately occurs, and is celebrated. Thus each private mercy, whether of a temporal or spiritual nature, should remind us of that public and universal blessing of redemption by Jesus Christ, from which every other blessing floweth, as a stream from its fountain, and for which God ought, therefore, upon all occasions, to be praised and glorified.

8. *The* LORD *is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.*

When Moses desired Jehovah to show him his "way" and his "glory," Exod. xxxiii. 13, 18, Jehovah passed by, and proclaimed himself, as here, "Jehovah, merciful, and gracious," &c. Exod. xxxiv. 6. How full of consolation to the penitent soul are all the words of this verse! "The LORD is merciful," רחום, the bowels of his tender compassion yearn over us, as those of a mother yearn over the child of her womb; "yea, a woman may forget her sucking child, yet can he not forget us:" Isa. xlix. 15. He is "gracious," חנון, ready to give us freely all things that are needful for our salvation. He is "slow to anger," bearing with the frowardness of his children, with their provocations and relapses for 40, 50, 60, 70 years together, before he strikes the blow; giving them, by this his long suffering, time for repentance.

* Of all birds it is known, that they have yearly their moulting times, when they shed their old, and are afresh furnished with a new stock of feathers. This is most observable of hawks and vultures, and especially of "eagles," which, when they are near an hundred years old, cast their feathers, and become bald and like young ones, and then new feathers sprout forth. Thus St. Ambrose, "Aquila longam ætatem ducit, dum vetustis plumis fatiscentibus, nova pennarum successione juvenescit." Dr. HAMMOND.

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And he is "plenteous in mercy," רַבחֶסֶד, "great, mighty in mercy," placing his chief glory in this attribute, and hereby teaching us how to estimate true greatness.

9. *He will not always chide: neither will he keep* his anger *for ever.* 10. *He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.*

God's chastisements are some of the most eminent proofs of his mercy. They are sent to reclaim us, and to save us from eternal punishment. They continue not always, but are removed when they have done their work; and while they last, are as nothing in comparison of those heavy stripes which our sins have deserved.

11. *For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy towards them that fear him.* 12. *As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.* 13. *Like as a father pitieth* his *children, so the* LORD *pitieth them that fear him.*

We are here presented with three of the most beautiful, apposite, and comforting similitudes in the world. When we lift up our eyes, and behold around us the lofty and stupendous vault of heaven, encircling, protecting, enlightening, refreshing, and cherishing the earth, and all things that are therein, we are bidden to contemplate in this glass the immeasurable height, the boundless extent, and the salutary influences of that mercy which, as it were, embraceth the creation, and is over all the works of God. Often as we view the sun arising in the east, and darkness flying away from before his face towards the opposite quarter of the heavens, we may see an image of that goodness of Jehovah, whereby we are placed in the regions of illumination, and our sins are removed and put far away out of his sight. And that our hearts may, at all times, have confidence towards God, he is represented as bearing towards us the fond and tender affection of "a father," ever ready to defend, to nourish, and to provide for us, to bear with us, to forgive us, and to receive us in the parental arms of everlasting love.

14. *For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we* are *dust.* 15. As for *man, his days* are *as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.* 16. *For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.*

The consideration of man's frail and perishable estate weighs with the Almighty, and prevails upon him to spare his creature. And doth not the tear of compassion start in the eye of him, who reads the description which David hath given of it in these verses? "Man," fallen, mortal man—"his days are as grass;" like that he cometh out of the earth, and continueth but a short time upon it; "as a flower of the field," fair but transient, "so he" unfoldeth his beauty in youth, and "flourisheth" awhile in the vigor of manhood; but, lo, in a moment, the breath of heaven's displeasure, as a blighting "wind passeth over him, and he is gone;" he boweth his drooping head, and mingleth again with his native dust; his friends and his companions look for him at the accustomed spot, which he once adorned—but in vain—the earth has opened her mouth to receive him, and "his place shall know him no more."

17. *But the mercy of the* LORD *is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him; and his righteousness unto children's children:* 18. *To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.*

Let not man presume, who withereth like the green herb; but then, let not man despair, whose nature with all its infirmities, the Son of God hath taken upon him. The flower which faded in Adam, blooms anew in Christ, never to fade again. "The mercy of Jehovah," in his Messiah, "is everlasting;" and of that everlasting mercy, poor frail man is the object. It extendeth to all the generation of the faithful servants of God. Death shall not deprive them of its benefits, nor shall the grave hide them from the efficacious influence of its all-enlivening beams, which shall pierce even into those regions of desolation, and awaken the sleepers of six thousand years. Man must pay to justice the temporal penalty of his sins; but mercy shall raise him again, to receive the eternal reward, purchased by his Saviour's righteousness. A passage in the First Epistle of St. Peter doth most admirably illustrate this part of our Psalm: "We are born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the WORD of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; but the WORD of the LORD endureth for ever. And this is the WORD which by the Gospel is preached unto you." 1 Pet. i. 23, &c.

19. *The* LORD *hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.*

The glorious Person who worketh all these wonders of mercy for his people, the WORD of God, and Saviour of the world, is triumphantly seated upon his "throne in heaven," and is possessed of all power to accomplish his will, even until all things shall be subdued unto him. The glories of his throne, the

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brightness of his excellent majesty, and the might of his irresistible power, are described at large by St. John, Rev. iv. v. xix.

20. *Bless the* LORD *ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word.* 21. *Bless ye the* LORD, *all* ye *his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure.* 22. *Bless the* LORD, *all his works, in all places of his dominion: bless the* LORD, *O my soul.*

Joy is observed to be of a diffusive and communicative nature. The heart of the Psalmist is full and overfloweth with it. Unable worthily to praise Jehovah for his mercies vouchsafed to the church, he inviteth heaven and earth to join with him, and to celebrate, in full chorus, the redemption of man. St. John saw the throne of Messiah prepared; he beheld the universal band assembled; and he heard when "all the angels round about the throne, ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, with every creature in heaven, earth, and sea," lifted up their voices, and sang together, "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever."

TWENTIETH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM CIV.

ARGUMENT.

THIS is an eucharistic hymn, full of majesty and sweetness, addressed to Jehovah, as Creator of the world. It setteth forth his glory, wisdom, goodness, and power, displayed, 1—9, in the formation of the heavens and earth; 10—18, in the various provision made for beasts, and birds, and for man, the lord of all; 19—24, in the revolutions of the celestial bodies, and the consequent interchanges of day and night, of labor and rest; 25, 26, in the sea, and every thing that moveth in or upon the waters. 27—30, The dependence of the whole creation upon God for its being and well being, is beautifully represented, with, 31, 32, the glory which the Creator receiveth from his works, the pleasure which he taketh in them, and the power which he hath over them. 33, The Psalmist declareth his resolution ever to praise Jehovah, and, 34, predicteth the destruction of those who refuse or neglect so to do. As there is a similitude between the natural and the spiritual creation, allusions of that sort are frequently made in the ensuing comment, which may, perhaps, point out the reason why the church hath appointed this Psalm to be used on Whit-sunday.

1. *Bless the* LORD, *O my soul: O* LORD *my God, thou art very great, thou art clothed with honor and majesty;* Heb. *with glory and beauty.* 2. *Who coverest* thyself *with light as* with *a garment; who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain*, i. e. of *a tent*, or, *pavilion.*

The Scriptures inform us, that the same Person, who redeemed the world, did also create it. In the ciid Psalm, as we are assured by St. Paul, "to the SON it is said, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands." To him, therefore, as Creator, is the civth Psalm likewise addressed. He is described as invested with "the glory which he had with the Father before the world was;" a glimpse of which he vouchsafed to the three disciples, who were present at his transfiguration, when "his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light." The first instance of his creating power is afforded us by the "heavens," which form a magnificent "canopy, or pavilion," comprehending within it the earth, and all the inhabitants thereof. It is enlightened by the celestial orbs suspended in it, as the holy tabernacle was, by the lamps of the golden candlestick, and it was originally framed, erected, and furnished by its Maker, with more ease than man can construct and pitch a "tent," for his own temporary abode. Yet must this noble pavilion also be taken down; these resplendent and beautiful heavens must pass away, and come to an end. How glorious then shall be those "new heavens," which are to succeed them, and to endure for ever!

3. *Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind.*

The divine Architect is here represented as "laying the beams of his chambers," as compacting his lofts or stories, "in the waters." Some think the formation of the terrestrial strata in the waters, which at the beginning covered all things, is here alluded to. If it be objected, that the Psalmist, in the course of his description, is not yet arrived at the formation of the earth, but is still in the upper regions of the air; may we not suppose that the subject is, in this particular, a little anticipated, which is no uncommon case in the sacred writings? The generality of expositors, however, interpret the passage of those "dark waters, compacted into thick clouds of the skies," which the Almighty is elsewhere said to make the "secret place, or chamber" of his residence, and a kind of "footstool" to his throne, Ps. xviii. 9. 11. And thus, indeed, the former part of

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our verse is plainly and immediately connected with what follows; "who maketh the clouds his chariot, and walketh upon the wings of the wind." How astonishingly magnificent and tremendous is the idea which these words convey to us, of the great King riding upon the heavens, encompassed with clouds and darkness, attended by the lightnings, those ready executioners of his vengeance, and causing the world to resound and tremble at the thunder of his power, and the noise of his chariot wheels! By these ensigns of royalty, these emblems of omnipotence, and instruments of his displeasure, doth Jehovah manifest his presence, when he visiteth rebellious man, to make him own and adore his neglected and insulted Lord. See and compare Ps. xviii. 10. and the context.

4. *Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire.*

From the manner in which these words are introduced, and the place where they stand, one should conceive the meaning of them to be, that God employeth the elements of air and fire, the winds, רוחות, and the lightnings, as his messengers, מלאכיו, and ministers, to execute his commands upon the earth.* But the apostle, Heb. i. 7, informeth us, that they have a further reference to immaterial angels; either because those angels often appeared in the likeness, or because they were endued with the properties of "wind and flame." Intellectual beings of the highest order in the realms above, are as ready to fulfil the word of Jehovah, as are the elements of this lower world. Both teach a lesson of obedience to the sons of men; to those of them more especially, who are appointed "angels" of the churches, and "ministers" of Christ.

5. Who *laid the foundations of the earth*, that *it should not be removed for ever.*

In the original it is, "Who hath founded the earth upon its basis." The formation of this globe on which we tread, is a wonderful instance of divine wisdom and power, whether we consider the manner in which the parts of it are put and kept together, or its suspension in the circumambient fluid, which, as some philosophers suppose, by pressing upon it on every side, forms so many columns, as it were, to support, and keep it balanced. The words, "that it should not be removed for ever," do by no means imply, that the earth is stationary, or that it is eternal; but only thus much, that it is so constructed, as to answer the end, and to last the time, for which it was created and intended. It shall continue the same in itself, and with relation to other bodies, neither altering its shape, nor changing its course, till the day appointed for its dissolution; after which, as there are to be "new heavens," so will there also be "a new earth."

6. *Thou coveredst it with the deep, as* with *a garment: the waters stood above the mountains.* 7. *At thy rebuke they fled: at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away.* 8. *They go*, or, *went, up by the mountains: they go*, or, *went, down by the valleys, unto the place which thou hast founded for them.* 9. *Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over: that they turn not again to cover the earth.*

Most interpreters suppose this to be a description of the situation of things, and of what was effected by the power of God, on the third day of the creation, when he said, "Let the waters be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear; and it was so." Indeed, the process at the creation was so exactly similar to that at the deluge, with regard to the circumstances here mentioned, that it matters not to which we apply the beautiful and truly poetical passage before us. In both cases, the earth was covered with the waters, as with a garment, in every part; in both cases, they fled at the Almighty word, like the scattered remains of a routed army; from the heights of mountains, whither they had ascended, they sunk down into the valleys; from the valleys they retired to the bed of the ocean, and a part of them descended from thence into the great deep that lieth beneath. Bounds were set them, beyond which they should never pass, to overwhelm us any more for ever. And the experience of 4,000 years hath taught us, that where the Creator hath laid his commands, plain sand is a sufficient barrier. Thus the church hath been delivered from her spiritual enemies; and she hath a promise, on which she may with full confidence rely, that "the gates of hell shall never prevail against her."

10. *He sendeth the springs into the valleys*, which *run among the hills.* 11. *They give drink to every beast of the field; the wild asses quench their thirst.*

The waters of the sea are not only prevented from destroying the earth, but, by a wonderful machinery, are rendered the means of preserving every living thing which moveth thereon. Partly ascending from the great deep through the strata of the earth, partly exhaled in vapor from the surface of the ocean in the air, and from thence falling in rain, especially on the tops and by the sides of mountains, they break

* In the French translation it is—"Who maketh the winds his angels, the flaming fire his ministers."

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forth in fresh springs, having left their salts behind them; they trickle through the valleys, between the hills, receiving new supplies as they go; they become large rivers, and after watering, by their innumerable turnings and windings, immense tracts of country, they return to the place from whence they came. Thus every animal hath an opportunity of quenching that thirst, which must otherwise soon put a period to its existence. The "wild asses" are particularly mentioned, because they live in remote and sandy deserts; yet even such creatures, in such places, are by the God of nature taught the way to the waters; insomuch that the parched traveller, when in search of a fountain, findeth them to be the best guides in the world, and needeth only to observe and follow the herds of them descending to the streams. In the spiritual system, or new creation, there are wells of salvation, living springs, waters of comfort, of which all nations, even the most savage and barbarous, are invited to come and drink freely. They flow among the churches; they descend into the hearts of the lowly; and they refresh us in our passage through the wilderness: for even there "do waters break out, and streams in the desert." Isa. xxxv. 6.

12. *By them shall the fowls of the air have their habitation*, which *sing among the branches*.

"By them," that is, by "springs of water," in the "valleys," the birds delight to have their habitations, and to sing amidst the verdant branches, which conceal them from our sight. "The music of birds," as one hath well observed, "was the first song of thanksgiving which was offered on earth before man was formed. All their sounds are different, but all harmonious, and altogether compose a choir which we cannot imitate."* If these little choristers of the air, when refreshed by the streams near which they dwell, express their gratitude by chanting, in their way, the praises of their Maker and Preserver, how ought Christians to blush, who, besides the comforts and conveniences of this world, are indulged with copious draughts of the water of eternal life, if, for so great blessings, they pay not their tribute of thanksgiving, and sing not unto the Lord the songs of Sion! "He that at midnight, when the very laborer sleeps securely, should hear, as I have often done, the clear airs, the sweet descants, the natural rising and falling, the doubling and redoubling of the nightingale's voice, might well be lifted above earth, and say, Lord, what music hast thou provided for the saints in heaven, when thou affordest bad men such music upon earth!" Walton's Complete Angler, p. 9.

13. *He watereth the hills from his chambers: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.* 14. *He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth;* 15. *And wine* that *maketh glad the heart of man*, and *oil to make* his *face to shine, and bread*, which *strengtheneth man's heart.*

The fertility of the earth is owing to God, who for that purpose "watereth" it, "from his chambers," whether the word מעליותיו hath a reference to the clouds above, or the depths below, for both are concerned in the operation. Hence all the glory and beauty of the vegetable world; hence the grass, which nourisheth the cattle, that they may nourish the human race; hence the green herb, for food and for medicine; hence fields covered with corn, for the support of life; hence vines and olive trees laden with fruits, whose juices exhilarate the heart, and brighten the countenance. Nor let us forget the spiritual benedictions corresponding to these external ones; the fruitfulness of the church through grace, the bread of everlasting life, the cup of salvation, and the oil of gladness.

16. *The trees of the* LORD *are full of sap; the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted.*

The whole earth is a garden, planted by hand, and watered by the care of Jehovah. But in a more especial manner is his glory set forth by the lofty and magnificent cedars, which, growing wild on the mountain and in the forest, owe nothing to the skill and industry of man. The moisture of the earth, rarefied by the heat of the sun, enters their roots, ascends in their tubes, and by due degrees expands and increase them, till they arrive at their growth. God hath also another garden, in which there are other trees of his planting, called by Isaiah, ch. lxi. 3, "trees of righteousness." These are his faithful servants, who, through the Spirit which is given unto them, become eminent and steady in goodness; their examples are fragrant, and their charity diffusive.

17. *Where the birds make their nests: as for the stork, the fir trees* are *her house.*

Most admirable is that wisdom and understanding, which the Creator hath imparted to the birds of the air, whereby they distinguish times and seasons, choose the properest places, construct their nests with an art and exact-

* Wesley's Survey of the Wisdom of God in the Creation. I. 149.

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ness unattainable by man, and secure and provide for their young. "Is it for the birds, O Lord, who have no knowledge thereof, that thou hast joined together so many miracles? Is it for the men who give no attention to them? Is it for those who admire them, without thinking of thee? Rather is it not thy design, by all these wonders, to call us to thyself? To make us sensible of thy wisdom, and fill us with confidence in thy bounty, who watchest so carefully over these inconsiderable creatures, two of which are sold for a farthing?"*

18. *The high hills* are *a refuge for the wild goats*, and *the rocks for the conies.*

The same force of what we call *instinct* prevails in terrestrial animals, and directs them to places of refuge, where they may be safe from their enemies. Thus the wild goats climb with ease to the tops and crags of mountains, where they deposit their young. And thus animals of another kind, which are more defenceless than the goats, and not able to climb like them, have yet a way of intrenching themselves, in a situation perfectly impregnable, among the rocks;† we find them, on that account, numbered by Solomon among the "four" kinds of animals, which, though "little upon the earth, are exceeding wise. The שפנים, are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks:" Prov. xxx. 26. They who in themselves are "feeble" and helpless, should look out betimes for a mountain of refuge, and a rock of safety.

19. *He appointeth the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down.*

From a survey of the works of God upon earth, the Psalmist proceedeth to extol that divine wisdom which is manifested in the motions and revolutions of the heavenly bodies, and in the grateful vicissitude of day and night occasioned thereby. A beautiful passage in the book of Ecclesiasticus will, perhaps, be the best comment on the former part of this verse: "He made the moon to serve in her season, for a declaration of times, and a sign to the world. From the moon is the sign of feasts, a light that decreaseth in her perfection. The month is called after her name, increasing wonderfully in her changing, being an instrument of the armies above, shining in the firmament of heaven; the beauty of heaven, the glory of the stars, an ornament giving light in the highest places of the Lord:" ch. xlii. 6. The latter part of the verse expresseth the obedience of the "sun," or "solar light," to the law of its Creator; it seemeth to "know" the exact time of its coming on, and going off, and fulfilleth the course prescribed to it, without the least deviation. O that we who are endowed with sense and reason, could in like manner fulfil our course; and that God's will were "done on earth, as it is" even "in" this lower and material "heaven!"

20. *Thou makest darkness, and it is night; wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep* forth. 21. *The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God.*

Night and darkness invite the wild beasts o fthe forest and desert from their dens and recesses, to "seek" the "prey" allotted them by the providence of that God who feedeth the young lions, as well as the young ravens, when hunger enforceth them, as it were, to call upon him. Thus, when a nation hath filled up the measure of its iniquities, the Sun of Righteousness knoweth the time of his departure from it; the light of the Gospel is darkened, and an horrible night succeeds: the executioners of vengeance are in motion, and a commission from above is given them to seize upon the prey.

22. *The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens.* 23. *Man goeth forth to his work and to his labor, until the evening.*

At the return of day, the sons of ravage retire, and sculk away to their several hiding places, that man, the lord of the creation, may arise, and perform, unmolested, the task which his Maker hath appointed him. When the light of truth and righteousness shineth, error and iniquity fly away before it, and the "roaring lion" himself departeth for a time. Then the Christian goeth forth to the work of his salvation, and to his labor of love, until the evening of old age warns him to prepare for his last repose, in faith of a joyful resurrection.

24. *O* LORD, *how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches.*

Transported with a survey of the wonders which present themselves in heaven above, and on earth below, the Psalmist breaks forth into an exclamation (and what heart hath not already anticipated him?) on the variety and magnificence, the harmony and proportion of the works of God, in this outward, and visible, and perishable world. What then are the miracles of grace and glory? What are those invisible and eternal things, which God hath prepared for them that love him, in another and a better world, and of which the things visible and temporary are no more than sha-

* Wesley, as above.

† It is uncertain what species of animals is here intended by the word שפנים. But it is enough for our purpose, that they are creatures remarkable for securing themselves in the manner here mentioned.

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dows! Admitted to that place, where we shall at once be indulged with a view of all the divine dispensations, and of that beatitude in which they terminate, shall we not, with angels and arch-angels, cry out, "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all; heaven and earth are full of thy riches, and of thy glory!"

25. So is *this great and wide sea, wherein* are *things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts*, or, *living creatures*. 26. *There go the ships;* there is *that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein.*

There is not in all nature a more august and striking object than the ocean. Its inhabitants are as numerous as those upon the land, nor is the wisdom and the power of the Creator less displayed, perhaps, in their formation and preservation, from the smallest fish that swims, to the enormous tyrant of the deep, the leviathan himself. By means of navigation, Providence hath opened a communication between the most distant parts of the globe; the largest solid bodies are wafted, with incredible swiftness, upon one fluid, by the impulse of another, and seas join the countries which they appear to divide. In the ocean we behold an emblem of the world; under a smooth deceitful surface it conceals dangerous rocks, and devouring monsters; its waves are ever restless, and oftentimes it is all over storm and tempest, threatening to overwhelm the helpless, despairing mariner, in a moment; such is the voyage we all have to make, ere we can reach the desired haven, and attain that happy clime, where, as we are told, there is "no more SEA." Rev. xxi. 1.

27. *These wait all upon thee: that thou mayest give* them *their meat in due season.* 28. That *thou givest them, they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good.*

In various ways hath God provided food for the support of all living creatures, and directed them to seek, and to find it. How pleasing a speculation is it, to consider the whole family of air, earth, and sea, as "waiting upon" the Father and Lord of all things, expecting when he should "open his hand," and distribute to each member his "portion of meat in due season!" The case is the same with regard to beings intellectual and spiritual, of which is composed the church and family of Christ in heaven and earth; these wait all upon HIM, by whom Jehovah hath opened the hand of mercy, and abundantly supplied all our needs, through the riches of his grace.

29. *Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.* 30. *Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.*

When God, in the season of winter, seemeth to hide his face, and to have withdrawn his beneficent influences, we hear the cries of the creation in distress; if he recall the breath of life from any creature, to which he had communicated it, that creature presently ceaseth to be what it was; sense and motion are at an end; the form and figure of it perish; and it is resolved into its original dust. But again he exerteth his quickening power, and, lo, fresh generations of animals are produced; fresh crops of vegetables shoot forth to nourish them; and there is a renovation of universal nature. The presence of God, in like manner, is the life, his absence is the death, of the soul. If he withdraw his grace, we perish everlastingly; but when he "sendeth forth his Spirit," as he did on the day of Pentecost, "old things pass away, and all things become new;" the winter is over, and spring succeeds in its place. Nay, the hour is coming, when, through the same Spirit, he shall also quicken our mortal bodies, and thus, in a more evident and wonderful manner, "renew the face of the earth."

31. *The glory of the* LORD *shall endure for ever: the* LORD *shall rejoice in his works.* 32. *He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth; he toucheth the hills, and they smoke.*

Such being the works of God, so manifold and so marvellous, the prophet foretelleth, that his "glory," displayed and declared by the same, should "endure for ever;" that creatures would never be wanting, to give him the praise and honor due unto him; insomuch that, graciously accepting this their tribute, and pleased to find a proper return made him, Jehovah should, as at the first creation, acquiesce and rejoice in all his works and dispensations. In the mean time, let the unruly and disobedient reflect upon the greatness of his power, and the terrors of his vengeance, who with a look can shake the earth, and with a touch can fire the mountains, as when he once descended on Sinai.

33. *I will sing unto the* LORD *as long as I live: I will sing praise unto my God, while I have my being.* 34. *My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the* LORD.

And who, O divine Psalmist, will not "sing" with thee, that hath an understanding to apprehend, and a tongue to celebrate, the works of his Maker and Redeemer? To whom will not thy heavenly meditations be sweet as honey, fragrant as the breath

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of spring, pleasant and cheering as the fruit of the vine? Who doth not long to partake of thy spiritual joy, and holy gladness?

35. *Let the sinners*, or, *the sinners shall, be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked*, or, *the wicked shall, be no more. Bless thou the* LORD, *O my soul. Praise ye the* LORD.

"The sinners," and "the wicked," are they of whom it is elsewhere said, that they "consider not the works of Jehovah, nor regard the operations of his hands," to give him praise and glory for them. These shall one day experience the power of that God, whose wisdom and goodness they would never acknowledge. They shall be "consumed," and "perish from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth." The Psalmist, therefore, endeth as he began; "Bless THOU the LORD, O my soul;" adding, by way of exhortation to us, and to all the world," Praise ye the LORD." Let us, then, with the "four-and-twenty elders, fall down before him that sitteth upon the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." Rev. iv. 10, 11.

TWENTY-FIRST DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM CV.

ARGUMENT.

THIS Psalm, the first part of it at least, to verse 15, we know, from 1 Chron. xvi. to have been composed by David, and given out on occasion of his placing the ark of God in Sion. It containeth, 1—8, an exhortation to praise Jehovah for his works of mercy and power, wrought in favor of Israel. 9—44, These are traced from their source, namely, the covenant made with Abraham, through the patriarchal history, to the deliverance of the nation from the Egyptians, and its settlement in Canaan; the end of all which, 45, is declared to have been, that God might have a people to serve him. The same is true of our redemption by Jesus Christ, which was the grand subject of the promise made to Abraham, and of which the temporal mercies, vouchsafed to the patriarchs and their posterity, were so many pledges and figures.

1. *O give thanks unto the* LORD, *call upon his name; make known his deeds among the people.*

God, who formerly resided in Mount Sion vouchsafing his presence in a tabernacle made with hands, hath since blessed the church with his appearance in the flesh; and we Christians are bound to "make known his deeds," and the mercies which he hath wrought for us, "among the people:" that so all the world may know him, and love him, and partake of his salvation.

2. *Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him: talk ye of all his wondrous works.*

Music and conversation are two things, by which the mind of man receiveth much good, or a great deal of harm. They who make "Jehovah" and his "wondrous works" the subjects of both, enjoy a heaven upon earth. And they who do in reality love their Saviour, will always find themselves inclined to "sing to him," and to "talk of him."

3. *Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the* LORD.

In whom should the redeemed "glory," exult, and triumph, but in their Redeemer, who hath made himself one with them, that they may be one with him? They who "seek" the Lord Jesus by prayer, should do it with a cheerful and joyous heart, because better it is to "seek" him, than to find all things else; and the soul that is brought to seek him, will soon exchange the galling cares, and tormenting desires of the world, for the light yoke and easy burden of her Saviour, in whom she will find rest, and peace, and comfort. Therefore,

4. *Seek the* LORD *and his strength: seek his face evermore.*

By faith we find our Redeemer in this life, and experience the power and comfort of his grace; but hope and love still seek, and wish, and aspire after the sight and enjoyment of him in heaven, whither he is ascended.

5. *Remember his marvellous works that he hath done, his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth;* 6. *O ye seed of Abraham his servant, ye children of Jacob his chosen.*

As an encouragement to "seek Jehovah evermore," "the seed of Abraham and the children of Jacob" are exhorted to bear in mind the marvellous works "which he had done" for them from the beginning, to protect and deliver them, as also "the judgments of his mouth," whether by this phrase we understand the righteous laws given to his people, or the denunciations and executions of vengeance against their enemies. But, alas! "the seed of Abraham" kept not the faith of their great progenitor; "the children of Jacob" have forfeited the blessing which their father obtained. We Gentiles have been, for a long season, the adopted "seed of Abraham," and have inherited the benediction of "Jacob." Let us not forget the "mar-

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vellous works?" of God in Christ, and the "judgments of his mouth."

7. *He is the* LORD *our God, his judgments are in all the earth.*

If Jehovah were the "God" of Israel, on account of what, in covenant, he promised and performed for them, he is now the God of us all, on account of what he promised and hath performed in Christ Jesus for them and for us. If, when he settled Israel in Canaan, "his judgments" were manifested to "all the earth," were they not manifested also when the Christian church was established, and the idolatrous powers of the world were overthrown by the Gospel?

8. *He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word* which *he commanded to a thousand generations.* 9. *Which* covenant *he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac:* 10. *And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law,* and *to Israel* for *an everlasting covenant:* 11. *Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance.*

Upon bringing the ark to Mount Sion, David teacheth Israel to bless and praise God for his having "remembered his covenant," made with an "oath" to their forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that he would, in due time, settle his people in the land of Canaan. Now, it is very observable, that in the hymn uttered by Zacharias, the father of St. John the Baptist, on the subject of our redemption by Christ, thanks are given to the Lord God of Israel, because he had "remembered his holy covenant, and performed the oath which he sware to our forefather Abraham." And what was that? Why, "that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, should serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness." But when, or where, did God promise any such thing to Abraham, except when he told him, "that his seed should be in bondage four hundred years," but that "the nation" which detained them in bondage, should afterwards be "judged," and that they should be "brought out," and come to "Canaan," Gen. xv. 13, where they were to "serve" him? The case seems to be this: Zacharias, under the immediate influence and direction of the Holy Spirit, transfers the language of the old dispensation to the affairs of the new one; he celebrates the redemption of the world, by Christ, from sin and death, in words which literally describe the redemption of Israel from Egypt by Moses; to teach us, that we should regard one as a sacramental pledge and figure of the other; that there is another bondage, in which the people of God are held; another Moses, who is to deliver them; another land of promise and of rest, where they are to be settled. This the Hebrews might have known, as St. Paul tells them, Heb. iv. from a passage in the xcvth Psalm, where, long after they had been in possession of Canaan, David speaks of another "day" of probation, and another "rest." The Jews have since had a melancholy proof of the same thing, by being dispossessed of that earthly inheritance, which they falsely deemed to have been perpetual, and vainly regarded as the end of all the promises, made to a "thousand generations," that is (a definite number being put for an indefinite,) to them, and to us, and to "as many as the Lord our God shall call," while the world shall last.

12. *When they were* but *a few men in number; yea, very few, and strangers in it.* 13. *When they went from one nation to another, from* one *kingdom to another people.*

How wonderful was the display of God's wisdom and power, in his choosing a single family, and that a small one, the members of which were literally "strangers and pilgrims upon earth;" in his promising to that family, in those circumstances, a large and fertile country, where the thrones of many princes were then firmly established; and, lastly, in his putting them into actual possession of it, at the time appointed! Thus the family of the holy Jesus was, at first, but small; "the members of it were a few, yea, a very few;" they were sojourners in a land not theirs; "they went from one nation to another;" nay, they were accounted the "refuse of the world, and the offscouring of all things." But "Fear not, little flock," saith he unto them, "for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom:" Luke, xii. 32. Let us view Israel brought into Canaan, nor doubt but that believers shall inherit the kingdom of heaven, and succeed to the thrones of apostate angels.

14. *He suffered no man to do them wrong: yea, he reproved kings for their sakes;* 15. Saying, *Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.*

The patriarchs, during their peregrinations, were often in imminent danger; as Abraham on account of Sarah, Gen. xx; Isaac, in a similar case, Gen. xxvi; Jacob from Laban, Gen. xxxi; and from his brother Esau; Gen. xxxiii. Yet, destitute as they were of earthly help, the mightiest kings could not hurt them. Their "ways pleased the Lord, and he made even their enemies to be at peace with them." Prov. xvi. 7. They were the typical "prophets, and Messiahs, or Christs*," of

* Ideo autem Christi, sive Uncti dicuntur, quod essent et sacerdotes et reges: summa quippe potestate præditi, nullique obnoxii. Hinc fœdera æquo jure pacta cum regibus: hinc bella suscepta, et

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Jehovah; and kings were forbidden to lift up a hand against them. How doth the same kind Providence watch over the body and the members of the true CHRIST; how often hath it interposed to protect and preserve them from the powers of the world!

16. *Moreover he called for a famine upon the land; he brake the whole staff of bread.*

When Jacob had escaped other perils, we find him and his family likely to perish with hunger. Gen. xlii. "Famine" is here finely represented as a servant, ready to come and go, at the "call" and command of God; for calamities, whether public or private, are the messengers of divine justice. "Bread" is the "staff" which supports life; when that staff is "broken," the body fails, and sinks to the earth. The word of God is the staff of spiritual life, the food and support of the soul; and the sorest of heaven's judgments is that mentioned by the prophet Amos, ch. viii. 11. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land; not a famine of bread, nor a thirst of water, but of hearing the words of the LORD." Such a famine was sore in all the lands, when Christ made his appearance in the flesh; whose advent, with the blessed effects of it, is wonderfully shadowed forth in the prophetical history of the patriarch Joseph.

17. *He sent a man before them,* even *Joseph,* who *was sold for a servant;* 18. *Whose feet they hurt with fetters; he was laid in iron.*

Joseph and Jesus were both envied, hated, and sold by their brethren; both suffered by a false accusation; the former was laid in irons, the latter crucified, and confined in the prison of the grave, fast bound with the bands of death. The wickedness of man, in working its own will, did unwittingly accomplish the counsels of God. "As for you," saith Joseph to his brethren, Gen. l. 20. "ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive." And how doth St. Peter address the brethren of that other Joseph? "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain—And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it—But those things which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled." Acts, ii. 23. and iii. 17.

19. *Until the time that his word came: the word of the* LORD *tried him.*

Joseph continued in prison, "until the time that his word, or cause, דבר, came" before the king, and was "known," according to our old translation; or, "until his word," or prediction concerning the chief butler's promotion "come to pass;" for this was the means of Joseph's enlargement and justification; since a person, guilty of the crime with which he stood charged, would not have been inspired to foretell future events. "Can we find," said Pharaoh, "such an one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?" Gen. xli. 38. In the mean time, the "word," commandment, or decree, אמרת, "of the LORD tried him" in the furnace of affliction, there refining and preparing him for his approaching exaltation to glory and honor. Thus was there a time appointed for the abode of Jesus in the grave, at the expiration of which, all his promises and predictions were fulfilled; he came forth, "made perfect through sufferings," and ready to "enter into his glory."

20. *The king sent and loosed him; even the ruler of the people, and let him go free.* 21. *He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance;* 22. *To bind his princes at his pleasure, and teach his senators wisdom.*

The circumstances of Joseph's advancement, here alluded to, are related, Gen. xli. &c. Those of our Lord's resurrection and glorification afford a marvellous parallel. At the determined hour, "The king" of heaven "sent" his angel, "and loosed him" from the bands of death; "the Ruler of the world let him go free" from the penalty which he had undertaken to pay, and had now fully paid. "He made him Lord of his house, the church, and Ruler of all his substance" in heaven and in earth, that he might, by his holy discipline, "bind princes at his pleasure," and by his Gospel "teach" true "wisdom" to the "senators" and politicians of the world; he was clothed with the robes of majesty, he was adorned with all the ensigns of royalty, and to him it was ordained that "every knee should bow." The storehouses of grace and salvation were opened; the nations came to be supplied by him with the bread of life; and we look for that happy day when the Jews shall do the same, and "Joseph shall be made known to his brethren."

23. *Israel also came into Egypt; and Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham.* 24. *And he increased his people greatly; and made them stronger than their enemies.* 25.

quidem nutu suo, auspiciis, ut aiunt, suis. Gen. xiv. 21. Hinc Hethæi ad Abrahamum: "Audi nos, Domine: Princeps Dei es apud nos." Ibid. xxiii. 6. nemini obnoxius, nisi Deo. Quo jure Isaacus et Jacobus usi sunt. Gen, xxvi. &c. Ad hæc prophetæ erant; ut hic, et Gen. xx. 7. Quos omnes titulos unum Christi nomen complectitur. Christi autem dicuntur, in typo Christi ipsius ab eis orituri. BOSSUET.

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He turned their heart to hate his people, to deal subtilely with his servants.

The Psalmist now exhibiteth to our view a fresh scene of tribulation and affliction, which occasioned repeated mercies, and a new deliverance. Israel, by means of Joseph, obtained an establishment in Egypt. But in process of time, the increase and prosperity of Israel excited the envy and jealousy of Egypt, and brought on a persecution. The kindness and love of God to his people "turned the hearts" of the Egyptians against them, and caused animosity to take place of friendship. A king arose who knew not Joseph, and measures were concerted to keep the Hebrews under; a royal edict was issued to prevent their increase, by putting the males to death; and the generation then in being was reduced to a state of the most abject servitude and cruel bondage. Such usage the people of God have often experienced from the world, at the instigation of him, who in Scripture is styled "the prince of this world."

26. *He sent Moses his servant,* and *Aaron whom he had chosen.* 27. *They showed his signs among them, and wonders in the land of Ham.*

When the tyranny and oppression of Pharaoh were at the highest, and Israel cried unto Jehovah because of the bondage, he remembered his promise to Abraham, and sent Moses, with Aaron, to effect that mighty deliverance, which was to be the grand pledge and figure of our salvation by Jesus Christ. Of him Moses prophesied, when he said, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, LIKE UNTO ME." Deut. xviii. 15. cited and applied Acts, iii. 22. He came to rescue mankind from a spiritual bondage, and to deliver all who were "oppressed by the devil:" Acts, x. 38, he came at a time when that oppression was most grievous among Jews and Gentiles: his birth was signalized by an order from another Pharaoh, to slay the infants; and Egypt afforded him a refuge from the tyrant's fury: he wrought innumerable "signs and wonders;" but they were all signs of mercy, and wonders of love. Those of terror and vengeance were reserved for a future advent, foreshowed in the destruction of Jerusalem.

28. *He sent darkness, and made it dark: and they rebelled not against his word:* or, *and did they not still rebel against his word?* 29. *He turned their waters into blood, and slew their fish.* 30. *Their land brought forth frogs in abundance, in the chambers of their kings.* 31. *He spake, and there came divers sorts of flies,* Heb. *a mixture came,* and *lice in all their coasts.* 32. *He gave them hail for rain:* and *flaming fire in their land.* 33. *He smote their vines also, and fig trees; and break the trees of their coasts.* 34. *He spake, and the locusts came, and caterpillars, and that without number;* 35. *And did eat up all the herbs in their land; and devoured the fruit of their ground.* 36. *He smote also all the first-born in their land, the chief of all their strength.*

Who can behold this army of divine judgments thus passing in dreadful array before him, without trembling very exceedingly at that power, which is able to send them, singly, or in conjunction, upon a sinful land? Who can reflect upon their number and variety, without adoring that goodness, patience, and long suffering, which tried so many different methods, and waited so long, to lead the offenders to repentance? For more particulars see the comment on Ps. lxxviii. 43—51.

37. *He brought them,* i. e. the people of Israel, *forth also with silver and gold: and* there was *not one feeble* person *among their tribes.* 38. *Egypt was glad when they departed: for the fear of them fell upon them.*

The Israelites not only came forth from Egypt, but came forth laden with the spoils of their enemies, which they were commanded to take, by him who is the absolute Lord of all property, and who, as a righteous judge, did thus award to his people the wages due to their incredible labors, the Egyptians being now willing and ready to furnish them with anything required, in order to dismiss them. "The Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We be all dead men." Exod. xii. 33. And what was very extraordinary, among such a number of men, women, children, and cattle, nothing was weak and "feeble," nothing unable to perform the journey. The order was, that "not a hoof should be left behind;" Exod. x. 26, and he who commanded gave strength to obey. Thou hast also enjoined us, thy servants, O Lord, to quit Egypt, and march for Canaan: let thy grace invigorate us, from time to time, that so we faint not by the way.

39. *He spread a cloud for a covering; and fire to give light in the night.* 40. *The* people *asked, and he brought quails; and satisfied them with the bread of heaven.* 41. *He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out: they ran in the dry places* like *a river.*

"Brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant how that all our fathers were under the cloud; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that

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spiritual Rock that followed them; and that ROCK was CHRIST." 1 Cor. x. 1—4. In our passage through this wilderness of life, over barren sands, and amidst fiery serpents, be thou, blessed Lord, our guide and our guard; protected by thy providence, supported by thy word, and refreshed by thy Spirit, lead us even where, and in what manner, it shall seem good to thee; only do not thou forsake us, and we ask no more.

42. *For he remembered his holy promise,* and *Abraham his servant.* 43. *And he brought forth his people with joy,* and *his chosen with gladness.*

The same God hath since "remembered again his promise to Abraham;" he hath visited his people, and redeemed them from the bondage of sin, under the tyranny of Satan; which redemption they daily celebrate in the church, with "joy and gladness," waiting for their final deliverance from death and the grave, when they are to sing in heaven "the song of Moses and of the Lamb." Rev; xv. 3.

44. *And gave them the lands of the heathen: and they inherited the labor of the people;* 45. *That they might observe his statutes, and keep his laws. Praise ye the* LORD.

It was not, therefore, intended that the Israelites should regard Canaan as their paradise, and look no farther; but that, being rescued from their enemies, and settled in peace and plenty, they should improve the opportunity, thereby afforded them, of serving the Lord their God, and of securing to themselves, through the obedience of faith, an inheritance in "a better country, that is to say, an heavenly." And let all the children of faithful Abraham, whose lot hath fallen in "a land flowing with milk and honey," upon earth, reflect, that God hath given them riches, and the leisure which riches procure, not for the purpose of indulging and corrupting themselves and others, but that they may glorify him, benefit their neighbors, and save their own souls; "that they may observe his statutes, and keep his laws." Israel was delivered by Moses, and the church redeemed by Christ, that God might "purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Tit. ii. 14.

TWENTY-FIRST DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM CVI.

ARGUMENT.

THE Psalmist here again commemorates the divine benefits, upbraiding withal the ingratitude of those who received them. 1, 2, He exhorteth men to the praise of Jehovah; 3—5, proclaimeth the blessedness, and longeth for the felicity of the saints; 6, confesseth the sins of Israel, and giveth a detail of their rebellions; 7—12, at the Red Sea; 13—15, when they lusted for flesh in the wilderness; 16—18, in the matter of Korah; 19—23, in that of the golden calf; 24—27, at the report of the spies; 28—31, in the affair of Baal-peor; 32, 33, at the waters of Meribah; 34—39, in not destroying idolatry, but being seduced by it. 40—46, God's frequent judgments, and as frequent mercies, are related; 47, a prayer is made, that Jehovah would gather Israel from among the Heathen, which shows the Psalm to have been written during some captivity of dispersion. The last verse contains an act of blessing and praise.

1. *O give thanks unto the* LORD, *for* he is *good, for his mercy* endureth *for ever.*

In the person of a penitent nation, the prophet invites mankind to "give thanks unto Jehovah," for that "goodness" which preventeth us with blessings, and for that "mercy" which forgiveth our transgressions; that mercy which was shown to our forefathers upon their repentance, and will "ever" be shown, upon the same condition, to us and our posterity; that mercy which will bring sin and misery to an end, itself continuing eternal and unchangeable.

2. *Who can utter the mighty acts of the* LORD? who *can show forth all his praise?*

But who is sufficient for a work which demandeth the tongues and harps of angels? "When you glorify the Lord," saith the son of Sirach, "exalt him as much as you can; for even yet will he far exceed; and when you exalt him, put forth all your strength, and be not weary, for you can never go far enough." Ecclus. xliii. 30.

3. *Blessed* are *they that keep judgment;* and *he that doeth righteousness at all times.*

Next to angels, they are blessed and qualified to praise God with the voice, who glorify him in their lives; who having experienced in themselves the "mighty acts" of mercy, pardoning the guilt, and breaking the power of sin, are become the servants of Jesus, and render to their Saviour "at all times," in adversity no less than in prosperity, the due tribute of unfeigned love and obedience.

4. *Remember me, O* LORD, *with the favor* that thou bearest unto *thy people: O visit me with thy salvation.* 5. *That I may see the good of thy chosen: that I may rejoice in the*

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gladness of thy nation; that I may glory with thine inheritance.

The Psalmist offereth a prayer for himself, or rather for the church of Israel, that she, with himself, might partake of such blessedness. The words might have a reference to a temporal restoration and felicity; but they certainly extend much farther, and form the most spiritual and heavenly petition that the devoutest Christian can prefer to the throne of grace. "Remember me, O Lord, with the favor" which thou hast always shown to "thy people," in whom thou hast delighted from the foundation of the world, and on whom it is thy good pleasure to confer a glorious kingdom. "O visit me with thy salvation," with which so many patriarchs, prophets, and kings, have desired to be visited, the salvation of thy Christ, the justifier of all them that believe, and the rewarder of his saints: "that I may see the good of thy chosen," their felicity in beholding thy countenance, and living for ever in thy presence; "that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation," the unspeakable gladness of those who enter into the joy of their Lord; "and glory with thine inheritance," singing hallelujahs before thine everlasting throne, in the Jerusalem which is above. The Israelitish church, when in peace and tranquillity serving her God, and chanting the songs of Sion, afforded a very lively representation of this eternal felicity.

6. *We have sinned with our fathers: we have committed iniquity; we have done wickedly.*

They who have joined with the prophet in his affectionate aspiration after the divine favor, may here learn the surest way to attain it; namely, by confessing their own sins, and those of their ancestors. "We have sinned with our fathers," that is, after their example of unbelief and disobedience, of which an account immediately followeth. The fathers' sins are often reflected in their children, and each new reflection, instead of being weaker, is stronger than the foregoing; as in the case of the Jews.

7. *Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies; but provoked* him *at the sea,* even *at the Red Sea.*

The Israelites did not profit, as they should have done, by the miracles wrought for them in Egypt; they increased not in the wisdom and knowledge of God their Saviour; but when they saw themselves pursued by Pharaoh, their faith failed, they murmured against Moses, and wished themselves again in the bondage from which they were just delivered: Exod. xiv. 10, &c. Thus, when the penitent findeth himself beset with difficulties and dangers; when he seeth before him that death unto sin, through which he must pass to a life of righteousness, while the devil and the world follow hard after him, to destroy or bring him back to a more cruel bondage, how apt is he to forget all that Christ hath done for him! Fear puts out the light of faith, and hides the prospect of the promised land; imagination recalls the former gratifications of sense; he is tempted to regret the desertion of Egypt, and to wish for a return to it again.

8. *Nevertheless, he saved them for his name's sake; that he might make his mighty power to be known.* 9. *He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it was dried up: so he led them through the depths, as through the wilderness.* 10. *And he saved them from the hand of him that hated* them: *and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.* 11. *And the waters covered their enemies: there was not one of them left.* 12. *Then believed they his words; they sang his praise.*

Comforted and encouraged by Moses, the armies of Israel advanced to the shore; and, lo, the waves, at the lifting up of the powerful rod, instantly parted, and, like so many well disciplined troops, arranging themselves in two columns, disclosed a new and strange path, by which the people of God were conducted, in perfect security, to the opposite shore; when the waters, falling down, and reassuming their ancient habitation, overwhelmed the infidel host, and left not a man to carry the news to Egypt. Through all the difficulties and dangers of the Christian course, faith will ever find a way opened, by the power of Jesus, from sin to righteousness, and from death to life: the enemies of our salvation, how formidable soever, shall disappear, and be no more; and we shall sing, like Israel, a song of triumph to the Lord our God.

13. *They soon forgat his works,* Heb. *They made haste, they forgat his works; they waited not for his counsel.* 14. *But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert.* 15. *And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their souls.*

Soon after the Israelites had experienced the power and goodness of Jehovah, at the Red Sea, we find them murmuring against him, Exod. xv. 24. They grew impatient, they looked upon themselves as forgotten, and given over to destruction. They loathed manna, and required flesh; flesh was sent them, on which they surfeited themselves; the wrath of God smote them, and many were carried off by a grievous plague: Numb. xi. 4. 33. Let us learn to wait God's time and

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counsel, for the supply of necessaries, much more of conveniences; remembering that he hath given us his Son, and therefore will not deny us such inferior corporeal blessings, as he foreseeth will really prove blessings to us. Let us be duly thankful for that "bread which cometh down from heaven," cautious how we request the good things of this world, and strictly temperate in the use of them when given.

16. *They envied Moses also in the camp,* and *Aaron the saint of the* LORD. 17. *The earth opened, and swallowed up Dathan, and covered the compauy of Abiram.* 18. *And a fire was kindled in their company; the flame burnt up the wicked.*

Moses and Aaron were the divinely appointed governors of Israel, in church and state. Envy and ambition led Korah, Dathan, and Abiram to accuse the former of tyranny, and the latter of priestcraft. Jehovah was appealed to, a day appointed, and a decision made. One body of the malcontents went down alive into the pit, another was consumed by fire from heaven: Numb. xvi. Let schismatics and rebels beware of that "pit," which is bottomless, and of that "fire," which shall never be quenched.

19. *They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image.* 20. *Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass.* 21. *They forgat God their Saviour, which had done great things in Egypt:* 22. *Wondrous works in the land of Ham,* and *terrible things by the Red Sea.*

While the terrible presence of God abode upon Mount Sinai, and Moses was gone up thither to receive the law, even then, and there, "at Horeb," the people apostatized to the old favorite sin of idolatry, and persuaded Aaron to make them a "calf," or "ox," before which they prostrated themselves, acknowledging it, or the power represented by it, whatever that was, to have been the author of their deliverance from Egypt; Exod. xxxii. "for as to Moses, they knew not what was become of him," nor ever expected to see him any more. Thus they exchanged their "glory," the glory which had accompanied them in the mystic cloud, nay, which was then present before their eyes on the top of the mount, "for an image made like to a four-footed beast," as it is said of the Heathen in their worst estate; Rom. i. 23, and thus they forgat Jehovah, who had wrought his works and wonders for them in Egypt and at the Red Sea. It is to be hoped, we shall never live to see a time, when the miracles of OUR Redemption shall be forgotten; when the return of Jesus Christ from heaven shall be despaired of; and when the people shall solicit their teachers to fabricate a new philosophical deity, for them to worship, instead of the God of their ancestors, to whom glory hath been ascribed, from generation to generation.

23. *Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy* them.

When we hear Jehovah saying to Moses, on account of his people's monstrous ingratitude, and atrocious wickedness, "Let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them, and I will make of thee a great nation;" when we hear Moses, notwithstanding this, interceding for his countrymen, with the offended Majesty of heaven; urging to God the glory of his name, the relation in which he stood to Israel, the covenant he had made with their fathers; and if they must be cast off, desiring himself to perish with them; "if thou wilt, forgive their sin; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written;" how are we astonished at an instance of such invincible fortitude, fervent piety, unadulterated patriotism, triumphant faith, and unbounded charity! Once, and but once, was this instance exceeded, by Him, in whose name the intercession of Moses was made and accepted; who, really taking upon himself the sins of his people, suffered the vengeance due to them; and who is now at the right hand of God, interceding for us all. See Exod. xxxii. 10—14, and 32.

24. *Yea, they despised the pleasant land; they believed not his word;* 25. *But murmured in their tents,* and *hearkened not unto the voice of the* LORD. 26. *Therefore he lifted up his hand against them, to overthrow them in the wilderness:* 27. *To overthrow their seed also among the nations, and to scatter them in the lands.*

The history here alluded to is contained in Numb. xiii. and xiv. The spies brought back a favorable account of the promised land and its productions, but communicated to the people those terrible apprehensions, with which themselves were possessed, concerning the power of the Anakims, and other inhabitants of Canaan. Infidelity presently discovered itself by its usual fruit, disobedience. They thought they should never be able to surmount all these difficulties, but should become a prey, with their wives and children, to the sword; and a return to Egypt was once more the cry of the camp of Israel. Therefore did Jehovah "lift up his hand against them;" he declared, that none of the generation then in being, Joshua and Caleb only excepted, should enter into his rest, but that they should fall

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in the wilderness, without setting foot in that pleasant and most desirable land. Discomfiture and dispersion were also threatened to their posterity, that is, if they should go on in the same spirit of rebellion, and fill up the measure of their fathers' iniquities: which they have since done, and are accordingly "overthrown among the nations, and scattered among the lands" to this day. But do not thou suffer us, O LORD, to despise that "pleasant land," which thou designedst to be the inheritance of thy saints; whatever obstructions may be thrown in our way, suffer us not, through sloth and cowardice, to "disbelieve thy word," to doubt the accomplishment of thy promises, or to "murmur" against thy dispensations.

28. *They joined themselves also unto Baalpeor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead.* 29. *Thus they provoked* him *to anger with their inventions; and the plague brake in upon them.* 30. *Then stood up Phinehas, and executed judgment; and so the plague was stayed.* 31. *And that was counted unto him for righteousness, unto all generations for evermore.*

By Balaam's advice, Numb. xxxi. 16, the Moabites and Midianites sent their daughters among the people of Israel, who soon yielded to the temptation, and fornication ended in idolatry; nay, perhaps it might be a part of the Moabitish ritual; as we know it was among the religious services paid by the latter Heathens to some of their deities. By the "sacrifices of the dead," may be meant sacrifices which were offered either to dead idols, or to men deified after death. To punish this apostasy, the wrath of Jehovah went forth, and 24000 perished by the plague, which at length ceased, when Phinehas had "executed judgment" upon Zimri and Cosbi, who seemed, indeed, to call aloud for it, by indulging their lawless passions in the midst of so grievous a calamity, at a time when the whole congregation were humbling themselves before God at the door of the tabernacle. "Wherefore," saith God, "behold I give unto him my covenant of peace; and he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood, because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel:" Numb. xxv. 12. It is most probable, as Dr. Hammond observes, that Phinehas, being the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, was one of the judges of Israel; and if so, he had a clear commission, for what he did, from Moses, who had "said to the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one his man, that were joined to Baalpeor:" Numb. xxv. 5. The case of Phinehas, therefore, is no precedent for uncommissioned zealots. In general we learn from this part of the sacred history, how acceptable to God is a well-timed zeal for his service; as also, how dangerous it is to converse too freely with those of the other sex, especially when they have been educated in a false religion, or in no religion at all.

32. *They angered* him *also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes:* 33. *Because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips.*

This instance of disobedience was, in point of time, prior to that mentioned in the preceding verses. It is related, Numb. xx. 2—13. The spirit of Moses, though he was the meekest man upon earth, was so exasperated and imbittered by continual murmurings and rebellions, that he is charged with "not having believed God, to sanctify him in the eyes of the children of Israel;" and he was, on that account, denied the honor of bringing them into the land of promise. He had been commanded to smite the rock, that water might come forth. In anger he smote it twice, thus upbraiding the people: "Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?" He showed not that affiance in God, that disposition to glorify him before his people, which became him in the execution of his office. "The wrath of man" found admission, and that "worketh not the righteousness of God." Thou, blessed Jesus, art the only perfect pattern of patience and love; O grant to all, but above all, to the pastors of thy flock, a "spirit" not easy to be "provoked," and lips not hasty to "speak unadvisedly."

34. *They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the* LORD *commanded them:* 35. *But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works.* 36. *And they served their idols; which were a snare unto them.*

When the iniquity of the Canaanites was full, it pleased God to extirpate the race, and Israel was commissioned to execute upon them the vengeance determined. But the conquerors suffered themselves frequently to be seduced into all the abominations of the conquered, and spared their idolatrous altars, till themselves came to bow down before them. Judg. ii. 2, 3. The Canaanites, against whom we Christians militate, are our lusts, which, if they are spared and treated with, will prove "a snare" to us, and in time become our masters. Mercy shown to them is cruelty to ourselves, and will always be found so in the end.

37. *Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils:* 38. *And shed*

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innocent blood, even *the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood.*

It is plain, that the "devils," mentioned in the former of these two verses, are "the idols of Canaan," mentioned in the latter. The word translated "devils," is שׁדים, literally, "the pourers forth;" by which it is highly probable, that the idolaters meant the great agents of nature, or the heavens, considered as giving rain, causing the earth to send out springs, and to put forth her increase, vegetables to yield and nourish their fruit, and animals to abound with milk, for the subsistence of their young.* Idolatry being a work of the devil, it is true, in fact, that what is offered to an idol, is offered to the devil; though the word, שׁדים, doth by no means imply it. We stand astonished, doubtless, at this horrid, barbarous, and unnatural impiety, of offering children by fire to a Moloch: but how little is it considered, that children brought up in the ways of ignorance, error, vanity, folly, and vice, are more effectually sacrificed to the great adversary of mankind!

39. *Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions.* 40. *Therefore was the wrath of the* LORD *kindled against his people: insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance.* 41. *And he gave them into the hand of the heathen, and they that hated them ruled over them.* 42. *Their enemies also oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection under their hand.* 43. *Many times did he deliver them, but they provoked* him *with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity.* 44. *Nevertheless he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry.* 45. *And he remembered for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies.* 46. *He made them also to be pitied of all those that carried them captives.*

This is an epitome of the history of the Israelites, from the time when they took possession of Canaan, downwards. Transgressions brought on chastisements; chastisements produced repentance; and repentance obtained mercy. For their last and grand rebellion against the Son of God, and their King Messiah, whom they murdered, the sore burden of heaven's displeasure hath now rested upon the nation these seventeen hundred years; but their eyes are not yet opened; their hearts have not, hitherto, relented. How hath the "wrath of Jehovah been kindled against his people, insomuch that he hath abhorred his own inheritance!" How hath he "given them into the hand of the Heathen, and caused them that hated them to rule over them!" How have "their enemies oppressed them;" how have they been "brought into subjection under their hand! Nevertheless, O Lord, regard their affliction, when thou hearest their cry;" grant them repentance first, and then pardon; "remember for them thy covenant;" let them change their mind, and do thou "change thy purpose, according to the multitude of thy mercies; make them also to be pitied of all those that have carried them captives;" cause them, upon their conversion, to find favor in the eyes of the nations; and do Thou, who hast so long been "a light to lighten the Gentiles," become once more "the glory of thy people Israel."

47. *Save us, O* LORD *our God, and gather us from among the heathen, to give thanks unto thy holy name*, and *to triumph in thy praise.*

It appears from this verse, that the Psalm was written at a time when Israel was in captivity "among the Heathen." Such will be the petition of the Jews hereafter to him whom they crucified; such is now the petition of the Christian church, that the elect may be finally gathered together, and united in one congregation, "to give thanks unto the name, and triumph forever in the praises of JESUS."

48. *Blessed* be *the* LORD *God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting; and let all the people say Amen. Praise ye the* LORD.

At all times, in all places, and by all persons, on earth and in heaven, in prosperity and adversity, peace or persecution, "the LORD God of Israel," the Saviour and Redeemer of his church, is to be "blessed;" nor can any situation exempt a believer from saying, "Amen, Hallelujah," that is, from blessing God, himself, and exciting others to do the same.

TWENTY-SECOND DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM CVII.

ARGUMENT.

The redeemed of the Lord are exhorted in this Psalm, 1—3, to praise him for his goodness in redeeming, and gathering them from the four quarters of the world. Their danger and their deliverance are represented under the four striking images, 4—9, of travellers lost in a wilderness, but directed and conducted home; 10—16, of prisoners rescued from captivity; 17—

* See the account given of the word by the learned and ingenious Mr. Parkhurst, in his excellent Hebrew-English Lexicon.

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22, of sick and dying men restored to health; 23—32, of mariners preserved in a storm at sea, and brought safe into port. 33—41, Some other instances of God's providence in the government of the world, and of the church, are adduced and insisted on, for, 42, the consolation of the righteous, and, 43, the instruction of all.

1. *O give thanks unto the* LORD, *for* he is *good, for his mercy* endureth *for ever.* 2. *Let the redeemed of the* LORD *say* so, *whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy:* 3. *And gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south.*

Eternal mercy is the theme here proposed; and they who have tasted its sweets, are invited to join in setting forth its praises. The members of the Christian church are now, in the most proper and emphatical sense of the words, "the redeemed of Jehovah, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy, and gathered them," by the Gospel, out of all lands, and from all the four quarters of the world, to form a church, and to supply the place of the apostate Jews; whose forefathers experienced, in type and shadow, the good things prepared for them and for us, in truth and substance. "Many," saith our Lord to the Jews, "shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God—and ye yourselves shall be thrust out:" Matt. viii. 11. Luke, xiii. 29. We, converted Gentiles, are the happy people; and we are taught in this Psalm to celebrate that mercy which made us so.

4. *They wandered in the wilderness, in a solitary way, they found no city to dwell in.* 5. *Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.* 6. *Then they cried unto the* LORD *in their trouble,* and *he delivered them out of their distresses.* 7. *And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.*

The spiritual blessings of redemption are represented by the Psalmist under four exquisitely beautiful and expressive images; which images are themselves four special acts of God's providential care and love, shown toward the bodies of men in the world; corresponding with as many works of grace, wrought on the souls of believers, in the church. The first of these pictures exhibiteth to our view a set of travellers lost in a pathless desert, and well nigh famished through want of necessary provisions. They make their distresses known by prayer to Jehovah, and, lo, he appears, as their guard, and their guide; he supplies all their necessities upon the journey, and conducts them in safety to their place of abode. Thus he dealt with Israel of old, in their passage, through the waste and howling wilderness, from Egypt to Canaan. And thus he is ready to deal with us all. "The world," saith Lord Bolingbroke,* "is a great wilderness, wherein mankind have wandered about from the creation—We are not only passengers, or sojourners, but absolute strangers at the first steps we make in it." We are so, indeed; and too often, through our own fault, continue such to the last; we find not the way which leads to heaven, nor, if we did find it, have we strength to travel in it, without the viaticum which cometh from thence, and which alone can bring us thither. Fervent and importunate prayer to the God of our salvation will procure, from above, knowledge to dispel our ignorance, and grace to help our infirmities; the former will discover to us our road, the latter will enable us to walk in it, and both together will carry us, in due time, to "the city of our eternal habitation."

8. *O that* men *would praise the* LORD for *his goodness, and* for *his wonderful works to the children of men!* 9. *For he satisfieth the longing,* or, *thirsty, soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.*

The former of these two verses is a chorus, repeated after the celebration of each of the four mercies here related. Literally it is, "Let them acknowledge to Jehovah his mercy, and his wonders for the children of Adam." And what can better deserve our acknowledgment, than the provision made for the bodies and souls of Christian travellers, in their way to that heavenly country and city, "where they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Rev. vii. 16.

10. *Such as sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death,* being *bound in affliction and iron:* 11. *Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the Most High:* 12. *Therefore he brought down their heart with labor; they fell down, and* there *was none to help.* 13. *Then they cried unto the* LORD *in their trouble,* and *he saved them out of their distresses.* 14. *He brought them out of darkness, and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder.* 15. *O that* men *would praise the* LORD for *his goodness, and* for *his wonderful works to the*

* Reflections on History, vol. i. p. 244 and 171.

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children of men! 16. *For he hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder.*

In this second piece of divine scenery, we behold a people groaning under all the miseries of captivity, deprived of light and liberty, chained down in horrid dungeons, and there expecting the day of execution. These calamities they are represented as having brought upon themselves by their rebellion against God, who takes this method of humbling them. It succeeds, and brings them upon their knees to Him who alone is able to deliver them. Moved by their cries, he exerts his power on their behalf, and frees them from the house of bondage. To a state of corporal servitude the Israelites, for their transgressions, were frequently reduced, and many times experienced, upon their repentance, the goodness of Jehovah in rescuing them from it. But the grand and universal captivity is that of sin and death; the grand and universal deliverance, for which all the redeemed of the Lord ought to praise his mercy, is that by Jesus Christ. Adam and all his posterity "rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the Most High." By so doing, they subjected themselves to a slavery the heaviest and bitterest of all others. The devil led them captive at his will, and set over them their own insatiable lusts and passions, as so many taskmasters, to afflict, and keep them under. By these the soul is confined so close in prison, and bound with so many chains, that it cannot get forth to do the will of God, even when that is made known to it. Of mankind in this state how truly may it be said, and how often in Scripture is it said, under these and the like figures, "They sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, being fast bound in misery, and bands stronger than iron—He also brought down their heart through heaviness, they fell down, and there was none to help!" A sense of this his woful condition forces the sinner to "cry unto the Lord Jesus in his trouble," and to say, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death!" "Bring my soul out of prison, that I may give thanks unto thy name." And now his prayer is heard, the grace of Christ cometh to his assistance, and he is made "free indeed." His chains, like those of St. Peter, fall off at the word of his deliverer; he is "saved out of his distress;" "he is brought out of darkness and the shadow of death," into the glorious light and liberty of the sons of God. The joy consequent upon such a deliverance will be exceeded only by that which shall take place in the hearts, and be expressed by the voices of the redeemed, on the day when Christ shall accomplish the redemption of their bodies also, as he hath already effected that of his own, from the power of the grave; when he shall dash in pieces the brazen gates and adamantine bars of that prison-house, put an end for ever to the bondage of corruption, and lead captivity captive into the highest heavens.

17. *Fools, because of their transgressions, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted.* 18. *Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat, and they draw near unto the gates of death.* 19. *Then they cry unto the* LORD *in their trouble,* and *he saveth them out of their distress.* 20. *He sent his word and healed them, and delivered* them *from their destruction.* 21. *O that* men *would praise the* LORD for *his goodness, and* for *his wonderful works to the children of men!* 22. *And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.*

The recovery of men from sickness affords a third image of the benefits conferred on our nature, by the Redeemer. Sickness, as we are here informed, is the punishment of human folly and iniquity. When it is extreme, it deprives man of all relish and appetite for his food; nay, it makes him loathe and detest the very sight and smell of that which should nourish and support him; in which case, he must waste away, and soon "draw near to the gates of death." But from those dreadful gates the power of God can snatch us when we are just about to enter them. To an infirm and emaciated body he can restore health, strength, and beauty; for diseases are his ministers and messengers; they visit us at his command, and at his command they retire, and we recover again. The Israelites in the wilderness, "because of their transgressions, and because of their iniquities, were often afflicted" with a plague. But when they repented, and atonement was made, the plague ceased. They were stung by fiery serpents; but when they "cried unto Jehovah, he sent his word, and healed them." "They were troubled," as the author of the book of Wisdom observes, "for a small season, that they might be admonished, having a sign of salvation to put them in remembrance of the commandment of thy law. For he that turned himself towards it, was not saved by the thing that he saw, but by thee who art the Saviour of all." Wisdom, xvi. 6, 7. Sentence of death was passed upon Hezekiah; he already saw himself at "the gates of the grave," and expected no

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more to "behold man with the inhabitants of the world." Yet his prayer prevailed for a respite, and fifteen years were added to his life. Isa. xxxviii. Now the mind, by reason of sin, is not less subject to infirmities than the body. These infirmities reduce a man to a state of langor and listlessness; he finds himself incapable of action, indisposed for the reception of divine truths, without taste for knowledge, or inclination for virtue; he even nauseates the book of God, and the bread of heaven; and the life of faith is in great danger. But the case is not desperate, while there is breath enough left to call in, by prayer, the great Physician of spirits. The most inveterate malady gives place to his efficacious medicines; appetite revives, health returns, and the believer is reinstated in the vigor and beauty of holiness. Let all who have been thus "healed, and saved from destruction," either of body or soul, "acknowledge to Jehovah his mercy, and his wonders wrought for the children of Adam: let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing."

23. *They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters:* 24. *These see the works of the* LORD, *and his wonders in the deep.* 25. *For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof.* 26. *They mount up to heaven, they go down again to the depths, their soul is melted because of trouble.* 27. *They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end;* Heb. *all their wisdom,* or *skill, is swallowed up.* 28. *Then they cry unto the* LORD, *in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses.* 29. *He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.* 30. *Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven.* 31. *O that* men *would praise the* LORD for *his goodness, and* for *his wonderful works to the children of men!* 32. *Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders.*

The fourth similitude chosen to portray the dangers of our present state, and the goodness of God displayed in our salvation, is taken from that signal instance of the divine power and providence, the preservation of mariners in a storm at sea. The description which the Psalmist hath given us of such an event admitteth of no comment. Experience alone can illustrate its beauty, evince its truth, and point out the propriety of the circumstances which are selected to furnish us with a full and complete idea of the whole. Few of us, indeed, are ever likely to be in that terrible situation. But then we cannot help reflecting, that there is a ship, in which we are all embarked; there is a troubled sea, on which we all sail; there are storms, by which we are all frequently overtaken; and there is a haven, which we all desire to behold and to enter. For the church is a ship; the world is a sea; temptations, persecutions, and afflictions, are the waves of it; the prince of the power of the air is the stormy wind which raises them; and heaven is the only port of rest and security. Often during the voyage, for our punishment, or our trial, God permitteth us to be thus assaulted. The succession and the violence of our trouble, the elevations and depressions of mind and fortune, the uncertainty of our counsels, and our utter inability to help ourselves, are finely represented by the multitude and impetuosity of the waves, the tossings and agitations of the vessel, the confusion, terror, and distress among the sailors. In both cases, prayer is the proper effect, and the only remedy left. With the earnestness of affrighted mariners, who will then be devout, though they never were so before, we should "cry unto the Lord Jesus in our trouble;" we should, as it were, "awake" him, like the disciples, with repetitions of "Lord, save us, we perish!" Then will he arise, and rebuke the authors of our tribulation, saying unto them, "Peace, be still;" and they shall hear and obey his voice. "He will make the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof shall be still;" and at length he will "bring us" in peace, joy, and gladness, "to our desired haven," there to "exalt him in the congregation" of his chosen, and "praise him in the" great "assembly" of saints and angels. This is the consummation so devoutly wished and requested by the church for all her children, at the time of their baptism, that they, "being delivered from God's wrath, may be received into the ark of Christ's church; and, being steadfast in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in charity, may so pass the waves of this troublesome world, that finally they may come to the land of everlasting life." Thus we see there is no spiritual evil, out of which God is not both able and willing to deliver us, when we call upon him. Are we ignorant of the way to the heavenly city? He will guide and conduct us thither. Are we bound with the chains of sin and death? He will loose and deliver us. Are our minds diseased and languid? He will heal and invigorate them. Are we in danger of being overwhelmed by the troubles

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of the world? He will preserve us in the midst of them, until he bid them cease. Of his power and inclination to do these things for our souls, he hath given assurance to all men, by those pledges of his love, the benefits and blessings conferred on the bodies of his people, in leading them through the wilderness to Canaan; in rescuing them so often from the miseries of captivity; in healing their diseases; and in saving those of them who "did business in great waters," from the perils of the sea. Certainly the mind of man cannot have a nobler subject for meditation in this world, than the wonders of providence, considered as representing the mercies of redemption.

33. *He turneth rivers into a wilderness, and the water springs into dry ground.* 34. *A fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.* 35. *He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into water springs;* 36. *And there he maketh the hungry to dwell, that they may prepare a city for habitation;* 37. *And sow the fields, and plant vineyards, which may yield fruits of increase.* 38. *He blesseth them also, so that they are multiplied greatly, and suffereth not their cattle to decrease.*

In this latter part of the Psalm, the prophet farther exemplifieth the power, the justice, and the goodness of God: his power, in being able to change the very nature of things; his justice and his goodness, in so doing, either to punish the rebellious, or to reward the obedient. A well watered and fertile country shall, for the sins of its inhabitants, be converted into a dry and a barren one. The plain of Jordan, which, before the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, was "well watered every where, like the Garden of Jehovah," Gen. xiii. 10, hath, since that overthrow, been a land of salt and sulphur, and perpetual sterility. Nay, even the once fruitful Palestine itself, that flowed with milk and honey, is at this day a region of such utter desolation, that the very possibility of its ever having sufficed to maintain the people who formerly possessed it, is now called in question. And, indeed, while the rain of heaven shall continue to be in the hand of God, how easy it is for him, by withholding it during a few months, to blast all the most promising hopes of man; and, instead of plenty, joy, and health, to visit him with famine, pestilence, and death! On the other hand, when the ways of a people please him, he can rid them of these dreadful guests; the rain shall descend from above, the springs shall rise from beneath, the earth shall yield her increase, the cattle shall feed in large pastures, the seasons shall be kindly, the air salutary, and the smiling face of nature shall attest the loving kindness of the Lord. Thus, in the dispensations of grace, hath he dealt with Jews and Gentiles. The synagogue of the former, once rich in faith, watered with the benedictions of heaven, fruitful in prophets and saints, adorned with the services of religion, and the presence of Jehovah, hath been, since the murder of the Son of God, cursed with infidelity, parched like the withered tops of the mountains of Gilboah, barren and desolate as the land of their ancient residence, whose naked rocks seem to declare to all the world the hardheartedness and unprofitableness of its old possessors. When the "fruitful field" thus became a "forest," the "wilderness," at the same time, became a "fruitful field." A church was planted in the Gentile world, and the "Spirit was poured out upon it from on high." In that "wilderness did waters break out, and streams in that desert." There was faith sown, and holiness was the universal product. "The wilderness and the solitary place was glad, and the desert rejoiced, and blossomed as the rose. It blossomed abundantly, and rejoiced even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon was given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon;" the privileges and honors of the synagogue were conferred upon the church; and the nations now "saw the glory of Jehovah, and the excellency of God:" Isa. xxxii. 15, xxxv. 1, 2. Spiritual increase, health and plenty, spiritual peace, joy and happiness, appeared in beauteous and lovely procession, and the blessing of Jesus was upon this his new inheritance in every way.

39. *Again they are minished and brought low, through oppression, affliction, and sorrow.* 40. *He poureth contempt upon princes, and causeth them to wander in the wilderness,* where there is *no way.* 41. *Yet setteth he the poor on high from affliction, and maketh* him *families like a flock.*

But let not those who have received the largest share of heaven's favors therefore boast and presume. The continuance of those favors dependeth upon the continuance of their fidelity and obedience. Mighty empires, with their "princes," have, for their wickedness, been "brought low" by the arm of Jehovah, and laid in the dust, while nations "poor" and feeble, and never thought of, have "been taken from thence, and exalted over them." What revolutions have, in like manner, happened, and probably are still to happen, in the church! Jerusalem is fallen, through unbelief; and the Gentile church standeth only by faith, from which, if she depart, vengeance will be executed on her likewise.

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Yet, even in the worst of times, there is a promise, that "the poor" in spirit, the faithful and humble disciples of the holy Jesus, shall be preserved from the evil, and "set on high from affliction;" yea, that they shall be multiplied "like a flock," under the care of the good Shepherd, to preserve his name, and to continue a church upon the earth, until he shall return again.

42. *The righteous shall see* it, *and rejoice; and all iniquity shall stop her mouth.*

Two consequences will follow from this alternate display of the mercy and the judgment of God. The righteous, finding themselves still the objects of the former, will have cause so rejoice and give thanks; and the wicked, when visited with the latter, will be forced, by their silence at least, to own that their punishment is just. This will certainly be the case at the last day, when the dispensations of God, and the perfect rule of equity observed in them, shall be manifested to all the world.

43. *Whoso* is *wise and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the* LORD: or, *Who is wise? and he will observe these things; and they shall understand the loving kindness of the* LORD.

A truly "wise" person will treasure up in his heart the contents of this most instructive and delightful Psalm. By so doing, he will fully "understand" and comprehend the weakness and wretchedness of man, and the power and "loving kindness" of God, who, not for our merit, but for his mercy's sake, dispelleth our ignorance, breaketh off our sins, healeth our infirmities, preserveth us in temptations, placeth us in the church, enricheth us with his grace, sheltereth us from persecution, blesseth us in time, and will crown us in eternity.

TWENTY-SECOND DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM CVIII.

ARGUMENT.

THIS Psalm is composed of parts taken, without any material alteration, from two others. The first five verses occur in Ps. lvii. 7—11; the last eight are found in Ps. lx. 5—12. The reader is therefore referred to the exposition already given of those Psalms.

PSALM CIX.

ARGUMENT.

ST. PETER, Acts, i. 30, hath taught us to apply the predictions in this Psalm to the betrayers and murderers of Messiah, who is, consequently, the person here speaking, and, 1—5, complaining of the injuries which he suffered from them; after which, 6—20, he forewarneth them of all the judgments and sore calamities that should come upon them and their posterity; 21—25, he returneth to the subject of his passion; 26—29, repeateth his supplications for himself and his church; and, 30, 31, concludeth with an act of praise. In this light was the Psalm considered and interpreted in the ancient church, by Chrysostom, Jerome, Augustine, Theodoret, and others.

1. *Hold not thy peace, O God of my praise:* i. e. *who art the subject of my praise.* 2. *For the mouth of the wicked, and the mouth of the deceitful, are opened against me: they have spoken against me with a lying tongue.* 3. *They compassed me about also with words of hatred; and fought against me without a cause.* 4. *For my love, they are my adversaries: but I* give myself unto *prayer.* 5. *And they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love.*

The holy Jesus, in these words, maketh supplication to the Father for redress and deliverance. He complaineth of the manner in which he was treated, when "he came unto his own, and his own received him not:" John, i. 11. Sometimes "the mouth of the wicked was opened upon him,"* roaring against him, like the roaring of lions, while they cried out, "He is a Samaritan and hath a devil, and is mad; away with him, away with him, crucify him, crucify him." Sometimes, "deceitful and lying tongues" were employed, either to entangle and entrap him in his talk, or to bear false witness against him. And all this was done, not only "without a cause," but men were his bitter and implacable "adversaries," in return for that "love" which brought him from heaven, to save them with an everlasting salvation. Let the afflicted and traduced disciple rejoice, in that he is conformed to the image of his Master. And from the example of that Master let him learn what course to take, when in such circumstances—"But I give myself unto prayer."

6. †*Thou wilt set a wicked man,* or, *the wicked one, over him, and Satan shall stand*

* Hæc autem cecinit David spirituali sensu in persona Christi a Judæis impetiti omnimodis blasphemiis. BOSSUET.

† As most of the following verbs are in the future tense, and the rest have evidently a predictive and future import, the same liberty is here taken, as in Ps. lxix. of rendering them throughout uniformly in that tense; by which means the curses pronounced in this Psalm will at once appear to be of the same import with those in the xxviiith chapter of Deuteronomy. The reader is entreated, when he shall have perused the Psalm, to turn to that chapter, and judge for himself.

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at his right hand. 7. *When he is judged, he shall be condemned, and his prayer shall become sin.*

A transition is here made to the adversaries of Messiah; primarily to Judas, who was guide to "them that took Jesus;" Acts, i. 16, secondarily to the synagogue, of whom Judas may be considered as an epitome and representative. It is foretold, that by betraying and murdering the best of masters, they should subject themselves to the tyranny of the worst; that they should become slaves to the "wicked one," who should justly be "set over them," when they had delivered themselves into his hands; that "Satan," who had stood by them to tempt them, should "stand at their right hand" to accuse them at the tribunal of God; that when tried, they would be convicted and "condemned," and even their "prayer" would be abomination in the sight of the Lord, as being offered without true contrition and repentance, without faith, hope, or charity. Such is the wretched state of the Jews, estranged from God, and in bondage to the devil; such the prayers, which, from hardened and malignant hearts, they continually utter, for the excision of all Christians, and for the extirpation of that blessed Name, on which Christians call. These prayers, instead of lightening the burden of their sins, certainly add to its weight. Enable us, O Lord Jesu, to resist Satan as a tempter, that he may not be our accuser; and grant us always so to pray, that our prayers may be heard.

8. *His days shall be few;* and *another shall take his office.*

This is the verse which St. Peter hath cited and applied in his discourse to the disciples, at the election of Matthias into the place of Judas. "Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, who was guide to them that took Jesus. For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity, and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out—for it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and, his bishopric let another take." The former of these two citations is made from Ps. lxix. 25, the latter is a part of the verse now before us. If Judas, therefore, be the person whose destruction the sufferer foretelleth, the person speaking in this prophetical Psalm must of necessity be our Lord himself, who suffered by the treachery of Judas. In Ps. lxix. 25, the prediction is in the plural number, "Their habitation shall be void;" yet St. Peter applies it, in the singular number, to Judas. The passage in our Psalm is singular, yet applicable not to Judas only, but to the whole nation of the Jews; whose "days," after they had crucified the Lord of glory, "were few;" who were dispossessed of the place and "office" which they held as the church of God, and to which, with all its honors and privileges, the Gentile Christian church succeeded in their stead, when the Aaronical priesthood was abolished, and that of the true Melchizedek established for ever.

9. *His children shall be fatherless, and his wife a widow.* 10. *His children shall be continually vagabonds, and beg; they shall seek* their bread *also out of their desolate places.*

If, by the wretched death of Judas, his wife became a widow, and his children orphans, vagabonds, and beggars, their fate was but a prelude to that of thousands and ten thousands of the same nation, whose husbands and fathers came afterwards to a miserable end, at the destruction of Jerusalem. Their children, and their children's children, have since been "continually vagabonds" upon the earth, in the state of Cain, when he had murdered his righteous brother, not cut off, but marvellously preserved for punishment and woe. Having nothing of their own, they roam through all parts of the world, civilized or barbarous, the scorn and contempt of mankind. And even if they are able to amass wealth, their unparalled avarice still keeps them poor and beggarly in the midst of it. Thus Dr. Hammond, in his Annotation on these verses—"By this is described, in a very lively manner, the condition of the Jewish posterity, ever since their ancestors fell under that signal vengeance, for the crucifying of Christ. First, their desolations and vastations in their own country, and being ejected thence; secondly, their continual wanderings from place to place, scattered over the face of the earth; and, thirdly, their remarkable covetousness, keeping them always poor and beggarly, be they never so rich, and continually laboring and moiling for gain, as the poorest are wont to do; and this is contiuually the constant curse attending this people wheresoever they are scattered."

11. *The extortioner,* or, *creditor, shall catch,* or, *seize, all that he hath; and the stranger shall spoil his labor.* 12. *There shall be none to extend mercy to him; neither shall there be any to favor his fatherless children.*

Since the destruction, of Jerusalem, how often hath this race been seized, pillaged, stripped, and impoverished, by prince and people, in all the nations of the known world;

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none appearing, as in other cases, to "favor and extend mercy" to them!* "They have no nation, none to avenge their grievous wrong, which the Lord God of their forefathers had ordained they should suffer, at all times, and in all places, wheresoever they have come, without redress. Nay, their general carriage hath been so odious and preposterous, that, albeit the Christian magistrates had conspired together for their good, they would themselves have certainly provoked their own misery." Thus, that excellent divine, the learned and pious Dr. Jackson, vol. i. p. 142. and 135.; whose reflections upon the history of the Jews, at and since their dispersion, it were to be wished that every Christian should peruse. For, as he himself observes, "Christian parents, whether bodily or spiritual, should be as careful to instruct their children what the Lord hath done to these Jews, as the Israelites should have been to tell their sons what God had done to Pharaoh." Ibid. p. 152.

13. *His posterity shall be cut off*, and *in the generation following, their name shall be blotted out.* 14. *The iniquity of his fathers shall be remembered with the* LORD, *and the sin of his mother shall not be blotted out.* 15. *They shall be before the* LORD *continually, that he may cut off the memory of them from the earth.*

The traitorous and rebellious "posterity" of of traitorous and rebellious parents, suffered an "excision" by the Roman sword, and "in the generation following, their name," as a church and civil polity, was "blotted out" of the list of states and kingdoms upon earth. "The iniquity of their fathers," which they had filled up, "was remembered with Jehovah, and the sin of their mother," that is, perhaps of the synagogue of Jerusalem, now in bondage with her children, "was not blotted out; that upon them might come all the righteous blood shed, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharius, whom they slew between the temple and the altar:" Matt. xxiii. 35. The blood of the prophets cried for vengeance against those who crucified the Lord of the prophets. God hid not his face any longer from all these horrible transgressions, but "they were before him continually," occasioned him to "cut off the memory" of his people, once precious and fragrant, "from the earth;" so that while apostles and martyrs are annually commemorated with honor, and their good deeds, blossoming out of the dust, perfume the church, and delight the souls of the faithful, the names of "Judas," and "Jew," are never mentioned but with contempt and abhorrence.

16. *Because that he remembered not to show mercy: but persecuted the poor and needy man, that he might even slay the broken in heart.*

The crime which brought upon its perpetrators all the above-mentioned judgments and calamities, is here pointed out too plainly to be mistaken. They "remembered not to show mercy" to him, who showed it to all the world; they "persecuted" him who for our sakes became "poor," and who condescended to ask of his creatures water to drink; they betrayed and murdered the lowly and afflicted Jesus, whose "heart" was "broken" with sorrow for their sins, and with a sense of the punishment due to them. How long will it be, ere the brethren of this most innocent and most injured Joseph, "say one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear: THEREFORE is this distress come upon us!" Gen. xlii. 21.

17. *As he loved cursing, so shall it come unto him: as he delighted not in blessing, so shall it be far from him.* 18. *As he clothed himself with cursing, like as with his garment, so shall it come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones.* 19. *It shall be unto him as the garment* which *covereth him, and for a girdle wherewith he is girded continually.* 20. *This* shall be *the reward of mine adversaries from the* LORD, *and of them that speak evil against my soul.*

They who reject Christ reject the fountain of "blessing," and choose a "curse" for their portion; and this portion, when they have finally made their choice, will certainly be given to them in full measure. The curse, that lighted on the Jewish nation, is resembled, for its universality and adhesion, to a "garment," which covereth the whole man, and is "girded" close about his loins; for its diffusive and penetrating nature, to "water," which, from the stomach, passeth into the "bowels," and is dispersed through all the vessels of the frame; and to "oil," which imperceptibly insinuates itself into the very "bones." When that unhappy multitude, assembled before Pontius Pilate, pronounced the words, "His blood be on us, and on our children," Matt. xxvii. 25. then did they put on the envenomed garment, which has stuck to and tormented the nation ever since; then did they eagerly swallow down that deadly draught, the effects whereof have been the infatuation and misery of 1700 years! If

* Thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save thee—The fruit of thy land, and all thy labors, shall a nation which thou knowest not, eat up; and thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed alway. Deut. xxviii. 29, 33.

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such, in this world, be "the reward of Messiah's adversaries, and of those who spake evil against him," what will hereafter be the vengeance inflicted on those who "crucify him afresh, and put him again to an open shame?" Heb. vi. 6. And what will be the operation of the sentence, "Go, ye cursed," upon the bodies and souls of the wicked? how will it at once affect all the senses of the former, and all the faculties of the latter, with pain, anguish, horror, and despair! Think on these things, ye sinners; tremble, and repent!

21. *But do thou for me, O* GOD *the Lord,* Heb. JEHOVAH *the Lord, for thy name's sake: because thy mercy is good deliver thou me.* 22. *For I* am *poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me.* 23. *I am gone like the shadow when it declineth: I am tossed up and down as the locust.* 24. *My knees are weak through fasting, and my flesh faileth of fatness.* 25. *I became also a reproach unto them:* when *they looked upon me, they shaked their heads.*

In this part of the Psalm, Messiah petitioneth for deliverance, urging to the Father his power as "Lord," the honor of his "name," and the greatness of his "mercy." He then pleadeth his own humiliation and affliction, his "poverty" and "heart"-felt agony of grief. Drawing towards the evening of his mortal life, he compareth himself to a "shadow, declining," and about to vanish from the earth, where he hath no rest, being persecuted from place to place, as a "locust" is driven hither and thither by the stormy wind and tempest; while enfeebled and emaciated by frequent "fastings," and long want of food during his passion, he was ready to sink under his burden; and what aggravated all his sufferings, was, that he met with no pity and compassion from those around him; his enemies "reproached" and "reviled him, shaking their heads, and saying, Ah! thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself," &c. Mark, xv. 29. Nor are we to suppose our Lord thus praying for his natural body only, but also for his mystical body, the church, that from all distresses, persecutions, and insults, the members of that body may in time be delivered, like their blessed Head, by a joyful resurrection to eternal life.

26. *Help me, O* LORD *my God; O save me, according to thy mercy.* 27. *That they may know that this is thy hand;* that *thou* LORD *hast done it.*

The resurrection of Christ was to be the great demonstration of Jehovah's power; and it was published as such by the apostles to all the nations of the world, who thereupon believed, and were converted. The Jews alone hardened their hearts against that proof, and continued impenitent.

28. *They will curse, but thou shalt bless: when they arise, they shall be ashamed; but thy servant shall rejoice.* 29. *Mine adversaries shall be clothed with shame: and they shall cover themselves with their own confusion as with a mantle.*

The apostate sons of Israel, though they have been so long "confounded" and blasted by the breath of heaven's displeasure, yet continue "cursing" and blaspheming, as it is here foretold that they should do. But God hath "blessed" his Son Jesus, and, through him all nations, who have been adopted into his family, and made his children by baptism; yea, and they shall be blessed, and enter, by thousands and millions, into the "joy" of their Lord, in that day when his crucifiers shall have no "covering" but their own "shame" and "confusion."

30. *I will greatly praise the* LORD *with my mouth: yea, I will praise him among the multitude.* 31. *For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save* him *from those that condemn his soul.*

The former of these two verses is parallel to that which St. Paul citeth from Ps. xxii. 22. "He that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethen, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee:" Heb. ii. 11. Great is the joy of the redeemed upon earth; greater will it be, after the resurrection of the dead, in the courts of heaven. Jesus, unjustly put to death, and now risen again, is a perpetual advocate and intercessor for his people, ever ready to appear on their behalf against the iniquitous sentence of a corrupt world, and the malice of the grand accuser.

TWENTY-THIRD DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM CX.

ARGUMENT.

IN this Psalm David prophesieth concerning, 1, the exaltation of Christ; 2, the sceptre of his kingdom; 3, the character of his subjects; 4, his everlasting priesthood; 5, 6, his tremendous victories and judgments; 7, the means of his obtaining both kingdom and priesthood, by his sufferings and resurrection. Parts of this prophecy are cited and applied in the New Testament, by our Lord himself, Matt. xxii. 43, by St. Peter, Acts, ii. 34, by St. Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 25, Heb. v. 6. The church, likewise, hath

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appointed it as one of the Proper Psalms to be read on Christmas-day. It appertaineth literally and solely to king Messiah.

1. *The* LORD *said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.*

We are here informed of Jehovah's eternal and unchangeable decree concerning the kingdom of Messiah, its extension, power, and duration. That Messiah should, after his sufferings, be thus exalted, was determined in the divine counsel and covenant, before the world began. Whether we suppose the Psalmist to be speaking of that determination, or of its actual accomplishment at the time of Christ's ascension into heaven, it maketh no great difference. The substance of the decree is the same. It was addressed by the Father to the Son, by Jehovah to Messiah, whom David in spirit styleth, אֲדֹנִי, "my Lord;" one that should come after him, as his offspring according to the flesh; but one, in dignity of person, and greatness of power, far superior to him, and to every earthly potentate; King of kings, and Lord of lords; God and man united in one person. To this person it was said by the Father, "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool;" in other words, Seeing, O my Son Messiah, thou hast glorified me on the earth, and finished the work which I gave thee to do, the great work of man's redemption; take now the throne prepared for thee from the foundation of the world; behold, all power is given unto thee; enter upon thy mediatorial kingdom, and reign till every opposer shall have submitted himself to thee, and sin and death shall have felt thy all-conquering arm.

2. *The* LORD *shall send the rod of thy strength out of Sion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.*

In the foregoing verse, David related the words spoken by the Father to the Son. In this, he himself, as a prophet, directeth his speech to King Messiah, predicting the glorious consequences of his enthronization, and the manner in which "his enemies" are to be "made his footstool." The "rod," or sceptre of Christ's "strength" is his word, accompanied by his Spirit. The law was given to Israel from Sinai, but the Gospel went forth from "Sion;" it was "preached to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem," Luke, xxiv. 47; there began the spiritual kingdom of Jesus; there were the first converts made; and from thence the faith was propagated by the apostles, to the ends of the earth. This David seeing beforehand, cries out, "Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies!" Go on, victorious Prince; plant the standard of thy cross among the thickest ranks of the adversary; and, in opposition to both Jew and Gentile tumultuously raging against thee, erect and establish thy church throughout the world! This was accordingly done with marvellous speed and success; and the church, thus erected and established among the nations, hath been marvellously preserved, "in the midst of her enemies," unto this day: yea, and the world shall sooner be destroyed, than she shall cease to be preserved.

3. *Thy people* shall be *wilting in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness: from the womb of the morning thou hast the dew of thy youth.*

The blessed effects of the Gospel, upon its publication, are here foretold. "The people" of Christ are those given him by his Father, and gathered to him by the preachers of his word. "The day of his power" is the season of their conversion, when the corruptions of nature can no longer hold out against the prevailing influences of grace; when the heart, will, and affections turn from the world to God; and they make, as the first disciples did, a free and voluntary offer of themselves, and all they have, to their Redeemer. Then it is that they appear "in the beauties of holiness," adorned with humility, faith, hope, love, and all the graces of the Spirit. With regard to the last clause of this verse, Bishop Lowth, in his admired Lectures,* has observed, and proved, that it may be fairly construed to this effect:—"More than the dew from the womb of the morning is the dew of thy progeny;" that is, Thy children, begotten to thee through the Gospel, shall exceed in number, as well as brightness and beauty, the spangles of early dew, which the morning discloseth to the delighted eye of the beholder. The whole verse, therefore, containeth a lively character of the subjects of Christ's spiritual kingdom, who are described by their relation to him as "his people;" by their "willingness" to obey and serve him; by their honorable attire, the rich and splendid robes of "holiness;" and by their multitudes, resembling the drops of "dew" upon the grass.

4. *The* LORD *hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou* art *a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.*

From Christ's regal office, and the administration thereof by the sceptre of his word and Spirit, the prophet passeth to his sacerdotal office, which was also conferred on him by the decree of the Father, and that decree, as we are told, ratified by an oath; "Jehovah

* Prælect x.

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hath sworn, and will not repent," or, change his purpose. The oath of God was the great seal of heaven, designed to intimate the importance of the deed to which it was set, and "to show to the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel:" Heb. vi. 17. Whether this oath passed at the actual consecration of Messiah to the priesthood upon his ascension, or at his designation thereto by covenant before the world, sufficient it is for our assurance and comfort, that it did pass. We have a Priest in heaven, who standeth continually pleading the merits of his sacrifice once offered upon the cross: "who ever liveth to make intercession for us;" and who is ready, at all times, to bless us, "by turning away every man from his iniquities," Acts, iii. 26., by aiding us against our enemies, and supporting us under our necessities. Oblation, intercession, and benediction, are the three branches of the sacerdotal office, which our great High Priest now exerciseth for us, and in the exercise of which the Father hath condescended in the most awful manner to promise, that he will hear and accept him on our behalf. His priesthood is not, like that of Aaron, figurative, successive, and transient, but real and effectual, fixed and incommunicable, eternal and unchangeable, according to that pattern of it exhibited to Abraham, before the law, in the person of Melchizedek, Gen. xiv. 18—20, and discoursed upon at large by the apostle, Heb. vii. throughout.

5. *The* LORD *upon thy right hand shall strike through kings in he day of his wrath.* 6. *He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill* the places *with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries:* Heb. *the head over much country.*

This is a description of the vengeance which King Messiah should take on his impenitent adversaries. By "The LORD, or my LORD, upon thy right hand," אדני על ימינך, the same person must undoubtedly be understood, who is mentioned in the first verse under the same title, אדני, as "sitting at the right hand of Jehovah." And the Psalmist, who has hitherto addressed himself to Messiah, or the Son, must be supposed now to make a sudden apostrophe to Jehovah, or the Father; as if he had said, "This my Lord Messiah, who sitteth at thy right hand, O Jehovah, shall smite through kings in the day of his wrath;" the kings of the earth will endeavor to destroy his religion, and put an end to his kingdom; the Neroes, the Domitians, the Dioclesians, the Maxentiuses, the Julians, &c. &c. shall stand up, and set themselves in array against him; but "the Lamb shall overcome them;" he shall "judge" and punish the "Heathen" princes, with their people, when in arms against his church; he shall raise up those who shall successfully fight his battles, and strew the ground with their "carcasses." As Messiah hath done to the antichristian powers of old, so shall he do to all others, before or at, his second advent. There is a day of forbearance, during which he will have his church to be, like himself, oppressed and afflicted, humble and resigned; but there is also a future day of wrath and recompense, when the sins and provocations of her persecutors shall be ripe for judgment; when their triumphs and her sufferings shall be at an end; when they shall fall for ever, and she shall ascend to heaven.

7. *He shall drink of the blood,* or, *torrent, in the way; and therefore shall he lit up his head.*

The means, by which Christ should obtain his universal kingdom, and everlasting priesthood, seem here to be assigned. In his "way" to glory, he was to drink deep of the *waters of affliction; the swollen "torrent" occurred in the way, and presented itself between him and the throne of God. To this "torrent in the way" the Saviour descended; he bowed himself down, and "drank" of it for us all; "and THEREFORE, על־כן, did he lift up his head;" that is, he arose victorious, and, from the valley in which the torrent ran, ascended to the summit of that holy and heavenly mount, where he reigneth, till "his enemies be made his footstool." St. Paul hath expressed the same sentiment in literal terms; "He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross: WHEREFORE, διο, God also hath highly exalted him." Phil. ii. 8.

* The Hebrew word נחל signifies, in general, "a current of water," which may be either a turbid, overwhelming "torrent," or a clear and gentle "stream." In Psal. xviii. 4, it denotes the "floods of ungodliness." In Psal. xxxvi. 8, it is used to signify the "divine pleasures." Hence arises an ambiguity in the interpretation of the words. "He shall drink of the brook in the way," which may be expounded either of the sufferings Christ tasted, or the refreshments he experienced; as the "waters" are supposed to be those of "affliction," or those of "comfort." Either way the sense is good and true, as it relates to Messiah. "Torrents," or the "overflowing of rivers," in the Scripture language, certainly, as Dr. Durell observes, do often denote "afflictions;" as in Psal. xviii. 4, cxxiv. 4, 5, cxliv. 7, &c. "the being oppressed by them," is also described by the action of "drinking," Psal. lx. 3, lxxv. 8, &c. And the idea of a "brook in the WAY," or the ROAD, seems to favor this exposition. But the author advances it, as becomes him to do, with great deference and submission, since Bishop Lowth and Mr. Merrick are of a different opinion.

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PSALM CXI.

ARGUMENT.

THIS is one of the Proper Psalms appointed by the church to be read on Easter-day. It containeth, 1, a resolution to praise Jehovah in the congregation, 2, 3, for his great and glorious works, and, 4, for the appointed memorials of them: 5, 6, his mercies to the church are celebrated, and, 7, 8, the equity and the stability of his counsels declared; 9, the blessings of redemption, and the new covenant, are mentioned, as they were prefigured of old in God's dispensations toward Israel. 10, Religion is proclaimed to be true wisdom.

1. *I will praise the* LORD, *with* my *whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and* in *the congregation.*

Jehovah is to be "praised," not only with the voice and the understanding, but with the "heart," with the "whole" heart, and all its affections tuned, like the chords of the son of Jesse's harp, to a song of gratitude and love. Solitary devotion hath, doubtless, its beauties and excellencies; but how glorious is it to hear the voices of a whole Christian "congregation" break forth into hallelujahs, like the sound of many waters, and the noise of mighty thunderings, while each one, as it were, provokes another to continue the blessed employment, with unremitted attention, and unabated fervor!

2. *The works of the* LORD are *great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.*

The subjects of man's praise are the "works" of God. Every one of these works, whether in the natural, or the spiritual system, is "great." Nothing cometh from the hands of the divine Artist, but what is excellent and perfect in its kind, adapted with infinite skill to its proper place, and fitted for its intended use. Happy are they, who with humility and diligence, with faith and devotion, give themselves to the contemplation of these works, and take "pleasure," and delight therein. To them shall the gate of true science open; they shall understand the mysteries of creation, providence, and redemption; and they who thus "seek," shall find the treasures of eternal wisdom.

3. *His work* is *honorable and glorious: and his righteousness endureth for ever.*

The "work," of all others, in which the "honor and glorious majesty" of Jehovah appeared, and which the Christian church celebrates with this Psalm, is the salvation and exaltation of our nature, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; an event which contained in it the accomplishment of the ancient promises, and thereby demonstrated to all the world the everlasting truth, fidelity, and "righteousness" of him who made them.

4. *He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered:* or, *he hath appointed a memorial for his wonders: the* LORD *is gracious and full of compassion.*

Jewish feasts were "memorials" of the "wonders" wrought in Christ for all mankind, to whom, no less than to Israel, God hath now showed himself "gracious and full of compassion."

5. *He hath given meat unto them that fear him: he will ever be mindful of his covenant.* 6. *He hath showed his people the power of his works, that he may,* or, *might, give them the heritage of the heathen.*

Agreeably to the "covenant" which God made with Abraham, as concerning his children according to the flesh, he "fed" and supported them in the wilderness, he overthrew their enemies by the might of his "power," and he put them in possession of Canaan, which before was "the heritage of the Heathen." Agreeably to the covenant which God made with the same Abraham, as concerning all believers, those "children of the promise which are counted for the seed," he feedeth them in the world with the true manna,* the bread which cometh down from heaven; he hath again "showed the power of his works" in the overthrow of idolatry; and again, by the conversion of the nations, given to his church "the heritage of the Heathen;" although, like Israel, she is commanded, and hath had frequent admonitions, not to fix her heart on an earthly Canaan; not to expect any permanent habitation, any enduring city here below; not to stop short of an eternal and heavenly rest.

7. *The works of his hands* are *verity and judgment; all his commandments* are *sure.* 8. *They stand fast for ever and ever,* and are *done in truth and uprightness.*

In all God's dispensations towards his faithful servants, and towards his impenitent adversaries, we admire and adore his "verity" in the performance of his promises to the former, and his "justice" in executing his vengeance on the latter. Thus the time of fulfilling his promise to Abraham came not till the iniquity of the Amorites was full. The case is the same as to the coming of Christ, the subversion of Paganism, the deaths of persecutors, the rise and fall of nations, the

* "Escam dedit"—Manna: quæ cætera Dei mirabilia in memoriam revocabat: unde in Arca servari jussa. Exod. xvi. 32. Erat autem Eucharistiæ figura, quæ vere divini amoris monumentum æternum. BOSSUET.

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conversion or excision of individuals, and every other instance of mercy or judgment. Another property of God's works is, that, being "done in truth and uprightness, they stand fast for ever;" and will then appear in perfect glory and beauty, when all the arts and labors of man shall be no more.

9. *He sent redemption unto his people, he hath commanded his covenant for ever; holy and reverend,* or, *terrible,* is *his name.*

He who "sent redemption" to Israel by the hand of Moses, hath now "sent redemption" by the power of Jesus to all the world: he who, at Mount Sinai, established his "covenant" with his people, and gave them a law, hath now established his "covenant" with the Gentiles, and published to them his Gospel from Sion. "Holy is his name," and therefore "terrible" to those who, under all the means of grace, continue unholy.

10. *The fear of the* LORD is *the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do* his commandments: *his praise endureth for ever.*

The "fear of God" is the first step to salvation, as it exciteth a sinner to depart from evil, and to do good; to implore pardon, and to sue for grace; to apply to a Saviour for the one, and to a Sanctifier for the other. Religion is the perfection of wisdom, practice the best instructor, and thanksgiving the sweetest recreation.

PSALM CXII.

ARGUMENT.

THE Psalmist enumerateth the blessings attending the man who feareth Jehovah; 1, the pleasure which he taketh in doing his will; 2, the prosperity of his seed; 3, the plenteousness in his house; 4, his comfort in trouble; 5, his internal joys; 6, the honor with which he is remembered; 7, 8, his holy confidence in God; 9, his good deeds, and the reward of them; 10, the envy, wretchedness, and perdition of the wicked. The blessings of the Gospel are spiritual and eternal; and they are conferred upon the members of the Christian church through Christ their head, who is the pattern of all righteousness, and the giver of all grace.

1. *Blessed* is *the man* that *feareth the* LORD, that *delighteth greatly in his commandments;* or, *he delighteth greatly in his commandments.*

The man who duly "feareth God," is delivered from every other fear; the man who "delighteth in God's commandments," is freed from every inordinate desire of earthly things; and such a man must needs be "blessed." Of this kind was thy blessedness, O holy Jesu, on whom did rest "the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah," and whose "meat" it was "to do the will of him that sent thee, and to finish his work." Isa. xi. 2, John, iv. 34.

2. *His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed.*

A father's piety derives the benediction of heaven upon his children. The posterity of faithful Abraham were often spared and favored on account of their progenitor; as the whole family of believers, Abraham and all, are blessed in Him who is the great Father of that family, and the Author of their salvation.

3. *Wealth and riches* shall be *in his house: and his righteousness endureth for ever.*

It sometimes pleaseth God to bestow on his servants, as he did on Israel of old, the good things of this world. And a rich man is therefore happier than a poor man, because "it is more blessed to give than to receive:" Acts, xx. 35. But the true "wealth" of Christians is of another kind; their "riches" are such as neither moth can corrupt, nor thief steal. Grace and glory are in the "house" of Christ, and everlasting "righteousness" is the portion of his children.

4. *Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness;* he is *gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.*

While we are on earth, we are subject to a threefold "darkness;" the darkness of error, the darkness of sorrow, and the darkness of death. To dispel these, God visiteth us, by his word, with a threefold "light;" the light of truth, the light of comfort, and the light of life. The Christian's temper is framed after the pattern of his Master; and he is ever ready to show to others that "love" and "mercy" which have been shown to him.

5. *A good man showeth favor and lendeth: he will guide his affairs with discretion.*

The former part of this verse may be rendered, with a little variation, "It is well with the man who is gracious and communicative." Ill-nature and avarice are their own tormentors; but love and liberality do good to themselves by doing it to others, and enjoy all the happiness which they cause. It is not God's intention, that any of the talents which he bestoweth upon us should lie dead, but that our brethren should have the use of them; even as Christ received the Spirit to communicate it to us, and our salvation is his glory and joy. The latter part of this verse is likewise capable of a different, and, indeed, a more literal translation: "He will support, or maintain, his words, or his transactions, in judgment;" that is, he who thus employed his talents for the benefit of mankind, will be

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able to render a good account to his Lord who intrusteth them with him.

6. *Surely he shall not be moved for ever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.* 7. *He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the* LORD. 8. *His heart is established, he shall not be afraid, until he see* his desire *upon his enemies.*

Nothing can deprive the person here described of his felicity. When his work is done, his body will go to its repose in the dust, but the "memorial" of his name and of his good deeds will be still fresh as the morning breeze, and fragrant as the flower of the spring. "He feareth no evil report," no blast of slander and malice can touch him; no tidings of calamity and destruction can shake his confidence in God; but he will hear the trump of judgment, and behold the world in flames, rather with joy than with dread; as knowing, by those tokens, that the hour of his redemption is come, when "he shall see his enemies," and even death, the last of them, under his feet.

9. *He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honor.*

His riches are not hoarded up, but "dispersed" abroad; and that not by others after his death, but by himself in his lifetime; "He hath dispersed." They are not squandered in the ways of vanity and folly, but "given to the poor;" nor are they given indiscriminately and at random, but "dispersed," like precious seed, with prudence and discretion, according to the nature of the soil, and in proper season, so as to produce the most plentiful harvest. Therefore "his righteousness endureth for ever;" its fruits and its good report are lasting among men, and it is never forgotten before God, who hath prepared for it an eternal reward. "His horn shall be exalted with honor, or, in glory;" whatever may be his lot upon earth, and even there the charitable man will frequently be had in "honor," at the last day, certainly, when the thrones of the mighty shall be cast down, and the sceptres of tyrants broken in pieces, then shall he lift up his head, and be exalted to partake of the "glory" of his Redeemer, the author of his faith, and the pattern of his charity, who gave himself for us, and is now seated at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens.

10. *The wicked shall see* it, *and be grieved; he shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away; the desire of the wicked shall perish.*

The sight of Christ in glory, with his saints, will, in an inexpressible manner, torment the crucifiers of the one, and the persecutors of the others; as it will show them the hopes and wishes of their adversaries all granted to the full, and all their own "desires" and designs for ever at an end; it will excite an envy which must prey upon itself, produce a grief which can admit of no comfort, give birth to a worm which can never die, and blow up those fires which nothing can quench.

PSALM CXIII.

ARGUMENT.

THE servants of God are, 1, exhorted to praise his name, 2, at all times, and, 3, in all places, on account, 4, 5, of his power and glory, 6—8, of his mercy in redeeming man, and, 9, making the Gentile church to be a joyful mother of children. This Psalm is appointed to be read on Easter-day.

1. *Praise, O ye servants of the* LORD, *praise the name of the* LORD. 2. *Blessed be the name of the* LORD, *from this time forth, and for evermore.*

Christians are the "servants" of Jesus Christ; and a most delightful part of their service it is to "praise" his holy and saving "name" in the church, which now useth this Psalm among others, and with it "blesseth the name" of her Lord and Saviour, from age to age. The Psalmist wished and prayed that this might be done, and he foresaw that it would be done, while the world should last, upon earth, and afterwards "for evermore" in heaven.

3. *From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, the* LORD'S *name is to be praised;* or, is, *praised.* 4. *The* LORD *is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens.*

At the diffusion of the Gospel through the world, the name of Christ was praised "from the east to the west," in churches every where planted by the apostles and their successors: and the grand subjects of joy and triumph among believers were, the superiority of their Master over the "Heathen nations" and their idols; the exaltation of "his glory above the heavens," and all the powers therein; the might of his arm, and the majesty of his kingdom.

5. *Who is like unto the* LORD *our God, who dwelleth on high?* 6. *Who humbleth* himself *to behold* the things that are *in heaven and in earth.*

Highly as our Lord is exalted above this system, above these heavens and this earth of ours, yet he condescendeth to regard

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every thing that passeth here, and to make us, the inhabitants of this lower world, and, for our sakes, all the other creatures in it, the objects of his peculiar care, and paternal love.

7. *He raiseth the poor out of the dust,* and *lifteth the needy out of the dunghill;* 8. *That he may set* him *with princes,* even *with the princes of his people.*

Such is his mercy to the poor sons of Adam in their fallen estate, that from the lowest and most abject condition, from the pollutions of sin, and from the dishonors of the grave, he raiseth them to righteousness and holiness, to glory and immortality; he setteth them on high, with the inhabitants of the heavenly Jerusalem, "with the princes of his people," the leaders of the armies above, with angels and archangels before his throne. What is the exaltation of the meanest beggar from a dunghill to an earthly diadem, when compared with that of human nature from the grave to the throne of God? Here is honor worthy our ambition; honor after which all are alike invited to aspire; which all may obtain, who strive worthily and lawfully; and of which, when once obtained, nothing can ever deprive the possessors.

9. *He maketh the barren woman to keep house,* and to be *a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the* LORD.

In the sacred history of the Old Testament, we meet with frequent instances of barren women who were miraculously made to bear children. Isaac, Joseph, Samson, and Samuel, were thus born of Sarah, Rachael, the wife of Manoah, and Hannah. To these may be added, from the history of the New Testament, the instance of Elisabeth, the wife of Zacharias, and mother of St. John the Baptist. These examples may be considered as preludes to that marvellous exertion of divine power, whereby the Gentile church, after so many years of barrenness, became, in her old age, "a fruitful parent of children, and the mother of us all." Wherefore it is written, "Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate, than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD." Isa. liv. 1. Gal. iv. 27.

TWENTY-THIRD DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM CXIV.

ARGUMENT.

THIS is another of the Psalms appointed by our church to be read on Easter-day. It celebrates the Exodus of Israel from Egypt, and the miracles wrought for that people, prefiguring the redemption of our nature from sin and death, and the wonders of mercy and love wrought for us by Jesus Christ.

1. *When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language;* 2. *Judah was his,* that is, *God's sanctuary,* and *Israel his dominion.*

When Jehovah delivered Israel from the bondage of Egypt, he chose them for his peculiar people; his presence resided in their camp, as in a "sanctuary," or temple; and he ruled them, as an earthly king exerciseth sovereignty in his "dominions." This world, and the Prince of this world, are to us, what Egypt and Pharaoh were to Israel. The redemption of our nature, by the resurrection of Christ, answereth to their redemption by the hand of Moses. When we are baptized into the death and resurrection of our Lord, we renounce the world, its pomps and vanities; and should, therefore, quit its corrupt "language," manners, and customs, with as much alacrity and expedition, as "the family of Jacob" left those of Egypt. We are the "sanctuary," the temple, in which Christ dwelleth by his Spirit; we are the subjects of his spiritual "kingdom," we are his peculiar people; in one word, we are his "church," and succeed, as such, to all the titles and privileges formerly conferred on Israel.

3. *The sea saw* it *and fled; Jordan was driven back.*

Although forty years intervened between the two events here mentioned, yet, as the miracles were of a similar nature, they are spoken of together. In the passage of Israel through the Red Sea, we may contemplate our passage from a death of sin to a life of rrghteousness through the waters of baptism; as our translation from death temporal to life eternal, is figured by their entrance into the promised land through the river Jordan. The waters in both cases are poetically represented as sensible of their Creator's presence; and by their retiring, and opening a path for the people of God, we are taught, that if we continue faithful, all obstructions will be removed in our way to heaven.

4. *The mountains skipped like rams,* and *the little hills like lambs.*

The tremors of Mount Sinai and the neighboring hills, when the law was given, afforded some specimen of that power which was afterwards exerted in the overthrow of idolatry, and the casting down of every high thing that exalted itself against the

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Gospel at its publication. "See, therefore, that ye refuse not him that speaketh: for if they escaped not, who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven; whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven." Heb. xii. 25.

5. *What* ailed *thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? thou, Jordan,* that *thou wast driven back?* 6. *Ye mountains,* that *ye skipped like rams;* and *ye little hills, like lambs?* 7. *Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the* LORD, *at the presence of the God of Jacob.*

If the divine presence hath such an effect upon inanimate matter, how ought it to operate on rational and accountable beings? Let us be afraid, with an holy fear, at the presence of God, in the world by his Providence, and by his Spirit in our consciences; so that we may have hope and courage in the day when he shall arise to shake terribly the earth; when "every island shall fly away, and the mountains shall be no more found." Rev. xvi. 20.

8. *Which turned the rock* into *a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters.*

He who brought water out of the sacramental rock in the wilderness, hath since caused rivers of living water to flow through the world, from the Rock of our salvation; nay, he hath dissolved the stony hearts of sinners, and made to spring up in them fountains of this water of life. For these great instances of his power and his love, we are taught to bless his holy name, when we sing this Psalm, as an evangelical hymn, on the day of our Lord's resurrection.

PSALM CXV.

ARGUMENT.

THE church, 1, 2, prayeth that God would glorify himself in her salvation; 3, she declareth her faith in him; 4—8, exposeth the vanity and folly of idolatry; 9—11, exhorteth her children to rely upon Jehovah; 12—15, foretelleth how he will bless, prosper, and increase his people, 16—18, never suffering the voice of praise and thanksgiving to cease upon the earth.

1. *Not unto us, O* LORD, *not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy,* and *for thy truth's sake.* 2. *Wherefore should the heathen say, Where* is *now their God?*

From these two verses it is evident, that the Psalm is not a thanksgiving for victory, but a petition for deliverance. God is entreated to "give glory," by such deliverance, "not to us," to our works or endeavors, but "to his own name;" he is requested to vouchsafe salvation, not on account of our merits, but of his "mercy," which inclineth him to be gracious; of his "truth," which disposeth him to fulfil his promises; and of his "honor," that the enemy may not have occasion to blaspheme him, and reproach his servants, as if their Master either could not, or would not, help them in the day of their distress. "Wherefore should the Heathen say, Where is now their God?"

3. *But our God* is *in the heavens, he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased;* or, *he doeth whatsoever he pleaseth.*

Should the insulting adversary ask the above question, "Where is now their God?" the faithful are ready with their reply, "Our God is in the heavens;" he is, where he ever was, upon his glorious throne, high over all the kingdoms of the world, and the powers of created nature; from thence he observeth and ordereth all things here below; what we suffer is by his appointment; and, at his good time and pleasure, he both can and will relieve us: "he doeth whatsoever he pleaseth."

4. *Their idols* are *silver and gold, the work of men's hands.* 5. *They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not.* 6. *They have ears, but they hear not; noses have they, but they smell not.* 7. *They have hands, but they handle not; feet have they, but they walk not; neither speak they through their throat.*

A beautiful contrast is formed between the God of Israel and the Heathen idols. He made every thing, they are themselves made by men; he is in heaven, they are upon earth; he doeth whatsoever he pleaseth, they can do nothing; he seeth the distresses, heareth and answereth the prayers, accepteth the offerings, cometh to the assistance, and effecteth the salvation of his servants; they are blind, deaf, and dumb, senseless, motionless, and impotent. Equally slow to hear, equally impotent to save in time of greatest need, will every worldly idol prove, on which men have set their affections, and to which they have, in effect, said, "Thou art my God."

8. *They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them.*

Idolaters, like the objects of their worship, are rather lifeless images than real men. What our Lord said of the Jews, is applicable to them, and indeed to all who reject the knowledge of the true God, and the doctrines of salvation; "Having eyes they see not, having ears they hear not." They see not the things which belong unto their peace: they hear not the word of instruction and exhortation; they speak not of religion and the kingdom of heaven; they work not the

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works of piety and charity; they walk not in the path of the divine commandments; they are spiritually blind, deaf, dumb, lame, and impotent; and when their idols are destroyed, they will perish in like manner.

9. *O Israel, trust thou in the* LORD; *he is their help and their shield.* 10. *O house of Aaron, trust in the* LORD; *he is their help and their shield.* 11. *Ye that fear the* LORD, *trust in the* LORD: *he is their help and their shield.*

Let the men of the world make to themselves gods, and vainly trust in the work of their own hands or heads; but let the church repose all her confidence in Jehovah, her Saviour and Redeemer, who alone can be her defender and protector; more especially let her ministers, the sons of the true Aaron, do this, who are the peculiar portion of their God, employed continually in his service, and designed to build up others in faith and hope; and let all who have been instructed, by their ministry, in the fear of the Lord, trust always in him, nor suffer any apprehension of danger or distress to separate them from him.

12. *The* LORD *hath been*, or, *is, mindful of us; he will bless* us; *he will bless the house of Israel, he will bless the house of Aaron.* 13. *He will bless them that fear the* LORD, both *small and great.* 14. *The* LORD *shall increase you more and more, you and your children.* 15. *Ye* are *blessed of the* LORD, *which made heaven and earth.*

The heart of the Psalmist is full of "blessing," and on his tongue is the word of kindness and comfort. The "blessings" formerly confined to Israel, have since been extended to the whole race of mankind. Jehovah, ever "mindful" of his creatures, hath visited the world by his Son and by his Spirit; he hath formed a church from among the Gentiles, appointed a priesthood and ministry in it, and given his benediction to both; he hath "blessed," with the blessings of grace, "them that fear him," of all nations, and of every degree; he hath "increased" and multiplied his people exceedingly; and the faithful members of the Christian church are now "the blessed of Jehovah, who made heaven and earth," and who is, consequently, possessed of all power in both.

16. *The heaven*, even *the heavens*, or, *the heavens, of heavens, are the* LORD'S; *but the earth hath he given to the children of men.* 17. *The dead praise not the* LORD, *neither any that go down into silence.* 18. *But we will bless the* LORD, *from this time forth and for evermore. Praise the* LORD.

He who himself dwelleth in the highest heavens, where he is praised and glorified by angels, hath "given the earth" for an habitation, at present, "to the sons of men," whose duty it is to praise and glorify him here below, as the angels do above. Now as "the dead cannot praise him," as they who sleep in the silent grave cannot celebrate him, we may be certain, that he will not suffer his people to be destroyed and extirpated, but will always preserve a church to "bless him" in all ages, till the end of the world; when the dead shall be raised, and the choirs of heaven and earth shall be united to praise and glorify him together before his throne for evermore.

TWENTY-FOURTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM CXVI

ARGUMENT.

IT is not certain by whom, or upon what occasion, this Psalm was composed. It plainly appears, however, to be a song of thanksgiving for deliverance from trouble, either temporal or spiritual, or both. To render it of general use, let it be considered as an evangeliecal hymn, in the mouth of a penitent, expressing his gratitude for salvation from sin and death. 1, 2, He declareth his love of God, who hath vouchsafed to hear his prayer; 3—9, describeth his distress, his deliverance out of it, and subsequent peace and comfort: 10, 11, he acknowledgeth himself to have been tempted to despond, but was supported by faith, in the day of trouble; 12—19, he determineth to receive the cup of salvation, to praise and to serve Jehovah, who thus delivereth the souls of his people.

1. *I love the* LORD, *because he hath heard my voice*, and *my supplications.* 2. *Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon* him *as long as I live.*

In the original it is, "I love,* because Jehovah hath heard," &c. The soul, transported with gratitude and love, seems at first to express her affection without declaring its object, as thinking that all the world must know who is the person intended. Thus Mary Magdalen, in her conversation, at the sepulchre, with one whom she supposed to have been the gardener, though no previous mention had been made of Jesus, saith, "Sir, if thou have borne HIM hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away;" John, xx. 15. And ought not the love of God to be excited in all our hearts by the consideration that, when we were not able to raise ourselves up to him, he mercifully and tenderly "inclined" and bowed down

* Some critics prefer our old version,—"I am well pleased."

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"his ear" to us; he "heard our supplications," and descended from heaven to help and deliver us? With hope, therefore, and confidence should we "call upon him," in all our troubles, "as long as we live."

3. *The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me; I found trouble and sorrow.* 4. *Then called I upon upon the name of the* LORD: *O* LORD, *I beseech thee, deliver my soul.*

These "sorrows," or "bands of death," once "compassed" the human race; these "pains of hell" were ready to seize on every son of Adam. The awakened and terrified conscience of a sinner hath felt the oppression of the former, and experienced some foretaste of the latter. In this situation he is described by St. Paul as crying out, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?" Let him take the course which the Psalmist took; let him "call upon the name of the Lord," even the Lord Jesus, who put himself in the sinner's place, and suffered for him unspeakable "sorrows and pains;" let him do this, and he shall be saved; and shall sing the praises of his almighty Saviour, in the words of this beautiful Psalm.

5. *Gracious is the* LORD, *and righteous: yea, our God is merciful.* 6. *The* LORD *preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me.*

In the salvation of a sinner we contemplate God's "grace," by which the work is effected; his "righteousness," which causeth him to perform what he hath promised through Christ; his "mercy," which induced him to send his Son, and to make the promise. This mercy is the mercy of a parent, and such as a parent showeth to those young and "simple" ones, who have been over-reached and deceived by a crafty adversary; to those who fall, and are unable of themselves to rise again: "I was brought low, and he helped me."

7. *Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the* LORD *hath dealt bountifully with thee.* 8. *For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears,* and *my feet from falling.* 9. *I will walk before the* LORD *in the land of the living.*

That peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost, which the penitent experienceth, as the effect and fruit of pardon, afford him some idea of the rest and felicity of heaven; and, accordingly, he speaks as one translated to those happy mansions, where there is no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, because there is no more sin. A Christian, delivered out of the miseries of this troublesome world, and at rest in Abraham's bosom, would express himself, as one should think, in these very terms. Remission of sins ought to be followed by newness of life, and the resolution of him whose "soul" hath been "delivered from death, his eyes from tears, and his feet from falling," should always be this, "I will walk before the LORD," as one under his inspection, "in the land of the living," or amongst the redeemed in the church; until the time come for me to depart hence, and to be numbered with the saints in glory everlasting.

10. *I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted:* 11. *I said in my haste, all men* are *liars.*

In afflictions and distresses, those of the spirit and conscience more especially, the soul is tempted to despond, and can only be supported by faith exerting itself in prayer: "I believed, and therefore have I spoken," or, "therefore spake I," that is, as above, verse 4. "I called upon the name of the Lord; O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul." And this I did, though so "greatly afflicted," that I had "said in my haste," in my hurry and trepidation occasioned by fear and amazement, "all men are liars;" there is no credit to be given to their promises of deliverance; I am lost and undone for ever. Yet my faith failed not entirely, and, lo, my prayer hath been heard and answered. St. Paul, relating the troubles which came upon him, and the manner in which he sustained them thus citeth a part of the 10th verse: "We, having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken: we also believe, and therefore speak; knowing that he, which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you." 2 Cor. iv. 13, 14.

12. *What shall I render unto the* LORD *for all his benefits towards me?* 13. *I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the* LORD. 14. *I will pay my vows unto the* LORD *now in the presence of all his people.*

The grateful penitent now asketh, what return he shall make to his kind Benefactor, for the most valuable of all blessings conferred upon him. And he presently resolveth to make the only return in his power, namely, to acknowledge and declare before men the goodness of Jehovah, ascribing all the glory where it is all due. This he determineth to do, by "taking the cup of salvation," which, as Dr. Hammond observes, among the Jews was twofold; one offered in a more solemn manner in the temple; Numb. xxviii. 7, the other more private in families, called the cup of thanksgiving, or commemoration of any deliverance, begun by the master of the family, and attended, on festival days, with

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a suitable hymn; such as was that sung by our Lord and his disciples, on the night when he advanced that cup into the sacrament of his blood, which hath ever since been to Christians "the cup of salvation," and which all penitents should now receive in the church, with invocation, thanksgiving, and payment of the "vows" made in time of trouble.

15. *Precious in the sight of the* LORD is *the death of his saints.*

The notion of the original word, יקר in this place, for "rare," or "precious," must be so taken as not to signify that which is spoken of to be desirable to, or in the presence of, the Lord; for it is the life, not the death, of his servants which is precious, in that sense, to God, the preserver of their lives. But when it is said, that their "death is precious," it means in effect no more, than that it is so considered, it is rated at so high a price by God, as that he will not easily grant it to any one who most desires it of him. Thus far Dr. Hammond. We may add, that much less will God be easily prevailed on to give up his people to death eternal. Rather will he work wonders of mercy and loving kindness to save them; as the penitent happily experienceth in himself.

16. *O* LORD, *truly I* am *thy servant, I* am *thy servant,* and *the son of thine handmaid; thou hast loosed my bonds.* 17. *I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the* LORD. 18. *I will pay my vows unto the* LORD *now in the presence of all his people.* 19. *In the courts of the* LORD'S *house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the* LORD.

Every penitent is the "servant" of God, "the son of his handmaid," the church, "loosed from his bonds," and redeemed from a state of slavery under sin, the world, and the devil, that he may serve a better Master, whose "yoke is easy, and his burden light." This blessed Master is from thenceforth the object of his love, duty, and adoration: to him he "offereth the sacrifice of thanksgiving," to him he "payeth his vows," among his fellow-servants in the church on earth; longing for that day to come when, loosed also from the bonds of death and the grave, he shall be admitted to sing hallelujahs with saints and angels, in the "courts" of the eternal temple, even "in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem," the holy, heavenly, and glorious city of God Most High!

PSALM CXVII.

ARGUMENT.

THIS Psalm, like the cxth, seems to be altogether prophetical of the joy that all the world should conceive, at the coming of the Messiah, to give salvation, first to the Jews, and then to all other nations, according to his faithful promise. PATRICK.

1. *O praise the* LORD, *all ye nations: praise him all ye people.* 2. *For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the* LORD endureth *for ever. Praise ye the* LORD.

It is remarkable, that of so short a Psalm one verse is quoted in the New Testament by St. Paul; the second verse is explained, though not quoted. Two questions naturally arise, upon reading the Psalm; first, who are the "nations and people," exhorted to praise Jehovah? secondly, what is that "merciful kindness," and that "truth," for which they are exhorted to praise him? The apostle hath given a satisfactory and decisive answer to both these questions, Rom. xv. 8, 9, &c. "Now, I say, that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the TRUTH of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his MERCY; as it is written, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles, and laud him, all ye people." From the apostle's reasoning, the verse of our Psalm, which he hath cited, appears to be a proof that "the Gentiles," or the Heathen world, should one day "glorify God;" they are, therefore, the "people," whom the Psalmist, in the spirit of prophecy, exhorted to "praise Jehovah." It appears also, why the Gentiles were to glorify God; namely, for his "mercy" and "truth," shown in confirming or accomplishing the "promises" concerning their vocation and conversion, "made unto the fathers;"* to Abraham, and his seed for ever; to all believers, whether of the circumcision, or the uncircumcision. Such, then, is the "merciful kindness" of Jehovah, which is said, in the Psalm, to be "great," mighty, and powerful "toward us;" such his "truth," which is affirmed to "endure for ever;" as the promises were made good to the Gentiles, when the Jews, because of unbelief, had been cast off. Let the hallelujahs of the redeemed be suitable to that "mercy," and co-eternal with that "truth."

PSALM CXVIII.

ARGUMENT.

IN this Psalm, a king of Israel appears leading his people in solemn procession to the temple, there to offer up the sacrifice of

* "Confirmata—et veritas Domini"—Promiserat enim Abrahamo Deus futurum, ut per Christum, benedictum illud Abrahami semen, benedicerentur omnes Gentes, Gen. xii. 3, xv. 18, interprete Apostolo, Gal. iii. 16. Quod cum præstitum videamus, jam intelligimus vere advenisse Christum, ac promissa Dei firma esse omnia. BOSSUET.

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praise and thanksgiving, for the marvellous deliverance from his enemies, and a glorious victory gained over them. After inviting the whole nation, 1—4, to join with him upon this joyful occasion, he describeth at large, 5—18, his danger, and his deliverance from it, which latter is wholly attributed to the power and goodness of Jehovah. After this, as Mr. Mudge has rightly observed, there ensues a kind of sacred dialogue. Being come to the temple, the victorious monarch speaks the 19th verse; they that open the gate, the 20th; he again, as he enters, the 21st; they with him seem to speak the next four verses, to the 25th; the priests of the temple the 26th; the first part to the king, the other to the people; the people the 27th; he the 28th; the 29th is the chorus verse, concluding as it began. The repeated application made of the 22d verse in the New Testament, and the appointment of the Psalm, by the church, to be used on Easter-day, lead us to consider the whole as a triumphant hymn, sung by King Messiah, at the head of the Israel of God, on occasion of his resurrection and exaltation.

1. *O give thanks unto the* LORD, *for* he is *good: because his mercy* endureth *for ever.* 2. *Let Israel now say, that his mercy* endureth *for ever.* 3. *Let the house of Aaron now say, that his mercy* endureth *for ever.* 4. *Let them now that fear the* LORD *say, that his mercy* endureth *for ever.*

The subjects of "thanksgiving" here proposed are Jehovah's "goodness" and his "mercy." He is the sole fountain of absolute and essential "goodness," the source of all excellency and perfection; and his "mercy" is the channel by which he communicateth this goodness, in an overflowing stream, to his people, who are, therefore, exhorted to praise him. The Christian church is now "the Israel of God;" her ministers constitute the true "house of Aaron," being the spiritual progeny of our great High Priest; and the Gentiles, not the Jews, are they who know and "fear Jehovah." Let these all celebrate, for these all have experienced, the benefits and blessings of "eternal mercy," by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

5. *I called upon the* LORD *in distress: the* LORD *answered me,* and set me *in a large place.*

The true value of every deliverance is to be estimated by the nature of the "distress" which required it. The rescue of David from his enemies, or that of Israel from captivity, might deservedly be extolled with the songs of Sion. How much more, then, is the church universal bound to lift up her voice in honor of Jehovah, who hath redeemed her from her spiritual adversaries, and freed her from the bondage of corruption, through Him who "died for her sins, and rose again for her justification;" who, in the days of his flesh, being, on her account, in "distress" and affliction, "called upon Jehovah, and was answered," by an "enlargement" from the narrow prison of the grave, to a boundless and glorious kingdom!

6. *The* LORD *is on my side; I will not fear; what can man do unto me?* 7. *The* LORD *taketh my part with them that help me: therefore shall I see* my desire *upon them that hate me.*

By frequent experience of the divine power and mercy, from time to time exerted on the behalf of Israel, that nation was instructed to trust in Jehovah; and, whenever they did so, success and victory never failed to attend their steps. Would not the case be the same with us in all our undertakings, if our faith was right and steadfast in God, who raised up Jesus from the dead, and who hath promised to make us "more than conquerors?"

8. It is *better to trust in the* LORD, *than to put confidence in man.* 9. It is *better to trust in the* LORD, *than to put confidence in princes.*

Armies of "men," however numerous, and to appearance powerful, may be routed and dispersed at once. "Princes" may not be able to help us; if able, they may fail us, as not being willing to do it; if both able and willing, they may die, ere they can execute their purpose. But that hope which is placed in God, can never, by these, or any other means, be disappointed. As we so often repeat these two verses, let us act agreeably to the declaration which we then make, and, instead of courting the world, by undue compliances, for its deceitful smiles and treacherous favors, let us in all points do our duty, and leave the event to God above. To encourage us in the performance of such a resolution as this, let it be remembered, that because our Saviour "witnessed a good confession before Pontius Pilate," and with meekness and patience resigned himself to the death of the cross for it, therefore God exalted him to glory and honor.

10. *All nations compassed me about: but in the name of the* LORD *will I,* or, *I did, destroy them.* 11. *They compassed me about, yea, they compassed me about: but in the name of the* LORD *I will,* or, *I did destroy them.* 12. *They compassed me about like bees, they are quenched as the fire of thorns: for in the name of the* LORD *I will,* or, *I did destroy them.*

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The tenor of the Psalm being one of thanksgiving for a deliverance already experienced, seemeth to require that the verb, at the close of each of these verses, should be rendered in the past time; not "I will destroy them," but "I did destroy them;" especially as it is said, "they compassed me about," and "they are quenched." As David and Israel were encompassed by hostile nations, over whom, through God's assistance, they often triumphed; so the Son of David, in the day of his passion, was surrounded by the furious multitude of Jews and Gentiles seeking his life; and, after the same example, his mystical body, the church, hath frequently been, on all sides, vexed and persecuted in the world. But, through the power of Jehovah, Christ overcame, and is set down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. The church, likewise, hath often risen superior to the efforts of her innumerable and malicious enemies, whose fury hath blazed forth against her with the sudden fierceness of "fire," when it is applied to a heap of dry "thorns;" and hath been as soon at an end; she hath triumphed, yea, and she will finally triumph, "in the name of the Lord her God."

13. *Thou hast thrust sore at me, that I might fall: but the* LORD *helped me.* 14. *The* LORD is *my strength and song, and is become my salvation.* 15. *The voice of rejoicing and salvation* is *in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the* LORD *doth valiantly.* 16. *The right hand of the* LORD *is exalted; the right hand of the* LORD *doth valiantly.*

The church may consider herself as victorious over her great adversary, the author of all evil, who had made his grand effort to effect her destruction, by putting to death her champion and king, Messiah. But Jehovah appeared at the time appointed, to bring him, and, virtually, all that should believe in him, from the dead. "Thou hast thrust sore at me, that I might fall; but Jehovah helped me." Risen, therefore, with Christ, from the grave, we proceed to praise Jehovah, in the words which Moses and Israel first used, when they had ascended from the depths of the sea, and beheld their enemies destroyed for ever; "Jehovah is my strength, and my song, and is become my salvation:" Exod. xv. 2. And never doth that sacred day come round, on which the resurrection of Jesus is celebrated, but "the voice of rejoicing is in the tabernacles of the righteous;" there is a noise of them that sing for joy, in the camp of the saints; the church militant resoundeth with thanksgiving, and the voice of melody; paradise is restored below, and earth beareth some resemblance of heaven, while these transporting hymns are sung in honor of our great Redeemer. He is that "Arm and Right Hand of Jehovah" which hath "done valiantly," which hath crushed our strongest enemy, and is very highly "exalted" over all. "Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power; thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy." Exod. xv. 6.

17. *I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the* LORD. 18. *The* LORD *hath chastened me sore; but he hath not given me over unto death.*

As Christ is risen, "we shall not die, but live;" we shall not die eternally, but we shall live, in this world, the life of grace; in the world to come, the life of glory; that we may, in both, "declare the works" and chant the praises of God our Saviour. We are "chastened" for our sins, but "not given over to death" and destruction everlasting; nay, our being "chastened" is now a proof that we are not so "given over;" for "what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" Heb. xii. 7.

19. *Open to me the gates of righteousness; I will go into them,* and *I will praise the* LORD: 20. *This gate,* or, *This is the gate of the* LORD, *into which the righteous shall enter.* 21. *I will thankthee, for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation.*

The faithful, like David and his people of old, demand admission into the courts of the Lord's house, there to praise him for his great and manifold mercies. But we may extend our ideas much farther, and consider the whole company of the redeemed, as beholding the angels ready to unbar the gates of heaven, and throw open the doors of the eternal sanctuary, for the true disciples of the risen and glorified Jesus to enter in. "Open ye," may believers exclaim in triumph to those celestial spirits, who delight to minister to the heirs of salvation, "open ye the gates of righteousness," those gates through which nothing unclean can pass, "that the righteous nation, which keepeth the truth, may enter in," Isa. xxvi. 2, and sing, with your harmonious choirs, the praises of him who sitteth upon the throne; for he hath overcome the sharpness of death, he hath opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. "THIS is the gate of the LORD, into which the righteous shall enter," to take possession of the inheritance prepared for them, "to thank" him who hath "heard them, and is become their salvation."

22. *The stone* which *the builders refused, is become the head* stone *of the corner.* 23. *This is the* LORD'S *doing, it* is *marvellous in our eyes.*

Whether this passage had first a reference

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to the case of David,* who, as a figure of Messiah, was brought from a state of rejection and persecution to the throne of Israel; or whether there be any truth in a Jewish tradition concerning a certain stone, which, after having been, by the builders of the second temple, thrown aside among the rubbish, was at last found to be exactly fitted for the honorable place of a chief corner stone; it is neither possible nor needful to ascertain. That the verses belong, in a full proper sense, to Messiah, is confessed by the Rabbies, and acknowledged by all. No text in the Old Testament is quoted by the writers of the New, so often as this, which we meet with in six different places; namely, Matt. xxi. 42. Mark, xii. 10. Luke, xx. 17. Acts, iv. 11. Ephes. ii. 20. 1 Pet. ii. 4. The sum and substance of the New Testament applications and expositions is, that Jesus Christ is the stone here mentioned; that he was rejected and set at nought by the chief priests and Pharisees, the then builders of the church; but that, being chosen of God, and precious to him, this most valuable stone, thus despised and rejected of men, thus thrown among the rubbish, and buried in it, was, at length, from such a state, exalted to be the chief corner stone in the building, the main support of the edifice, and a centre of union for Jew and Gentile, the two parts of which it consisted; that this was the work of God, and the admiration of man. And what can be more truly marvellous, than that a person, put to death as a malefactor, and laid in the grave, should from thence arise immortal, and become the head of an immortal society; should ascend into heaven, be invested with power, and crowned with glory; and should prepare a way for the sons of Adam to follow him into those mansions of eternal bliss!

24. *This* is *the day* which *the* LORD *hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.*

Of the day on which Christ arose from the dead, it may, with more propriety than of any other day, be affirmed, "This is the day which Jehovah hath made." Then it was, that the "rejected stone" became the "head of the corner." A morning then dawned which is to be followed by no evening; a brighter sun arose upon the world, which is to set no more; a day began, which will never end; and night and darkness departed, to return not again. For thus saith the Lord to his church by the prophet Isaiah, "Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself, for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended:" Isa. lx. 20. Easter-day is in a peculiar manner consecrated to Him, who, by his resurrection, triumphed over death and hell. On that day, through faith, we triumph with him; we "rejoice and are glad in his salvation."

25. *Save now, I beseech thee, O* LORD: *O* LORD, *I beseech thee, send now prosperity.* 26. *Blessed* be *he that cometh in the name of the* LORD: *we have blessed you out of*, or, *you that are of, the house of the* LORD.

As a prelude to the triumphant manner in which Jesus Christ, after his resurrection, should ascend to the heavenly Jerusalem, he entered the earthly city, before his passion, amidst the acclamations of the multitude, who hailed him as King of Sion, and with palm branches, the emblems of victory, in their hands, sung before him these words, partly taken from our Psalm, "hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest." The word "Hosanna," is in the original, הושׁיעה נא, "Save now!" The form of words used by the people was both a petition and a congratulation; as if they had said, Let us beseech Jehovah, in the language of the cxviiith Psalm, to grant salvation to the Son of David, and to send us now prosperity under him: Blessed is he who thus cometh, not in his own name and power, but in the name and power of Jehovah, according to the prophecies concerning him, to deliver us from all our enemies: Ratify, O Jehovah, in the highest, or in heaven, these petitions which we make for the salvation and prosperity of our King, that thy blessings upon him and us may be established on earth. Since the resurrection of our Lord, the faithful have expressed, in these two verses, the same wishes and prayers for the increase of his kingdom, and the prosperity of his house and family, of his ministers and his people: "We bless you that are of the house of Jehovah."

27. *God* is *the* LORD, *which hath showed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords*, even *unto the horns of the altar.*

As Jehovah hath manifested his power and glory, by raising Christ from the dead; as he hath, by so doing, "showed us the light" of life and immortality; let us observe the festival, which is designed to perpetuate the memory of so great and joyful an event. "Christ, our passover," saith an apostle "is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast:" 1 Cor. v. 7. Let us keep it, only changing legal for evangelical sacraments and ceremonies; let us go to the altar, not to see a figure of the lamb of God, as he was to be

* David a Saule et aliquaudiu decem tribubus reprobatus, ac soli tribui Judæ agnitus, deinde omnium princeps; et sub figura ejus Christus a Judæis ac Gentibus impetitus, mox utrorumque caput, ut ipse interpretatur. Matt. xxi. 42. BOSSUET.

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slain; but to behold a representation of him as he hath been slain; to behold, in figure, his body broken, and his blood poured out; to eat the bread of life, and drink the cup of salvation.

28. *Thou* art *my God, and I will praise thee:* thou art *my God, I will exalt thee.* 29. *O give thanks unto the* LORD, *for* he is *good: for his mercy* endureth *for ever.*

The prophet declareth his resolution to "praise" and to "exalt," to magnify and to glorify, his "God;" he then concludes, as he began, with exhorting all the world to do the same. Preserve to us, blessed Lord, the use of these divine hymns in thy church, until, at the resurrection of the just, we shall celebrate an Easter in heaven, and sing them new in the kingdom of God.

TWENTY-FOURTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM CXIX.

ARGUMENT.

THIS Psalm is divided (most probably for the advantage of memory) according to the number of letters which compose the Hebrew alphabet, into twenty-two portions, of eight verses each; and not only every portion, but every verse of that portion, begins with the letter appropriated to it. David must, undoubtedly, have been the author. He describeth, in a series of devotional meditations, the instruction and the comfort which, through all vicissitudes of mind and fortune, he had ever found in the word of God. The many strong expressions of love towards the law, and the repeated resolutions and vows to observe it, will often force us to turn our thoughts to the true David, whose "meat and drink it was, to do the will of him that sent him." The passages more especially characteristic of him, as well as those which allude primarily to any particular circumstances in the history of the patriarch David, are pointed out in the course of the comment. But the chief design through the whole hath been, to draw forth the lessons of heavenly wisdom and comfort, contained in this interesting composition, for the service of believers, who, while they are accomplishing their pilgrimage and warfare upon earth, should continually solace themselves with the cxixth Psalm, and repair to it as to a fountain, which can never be exhausted. Between the verses of each portion, a connection is frequently to be traced, but it doth not often seem to extend from one portion to another. The many words employed to express the revelations of God's will, have distinct significations, denoting different parts or portions of the Scriptures, which it hath sometimes been found of great use to take into consideration, while at others the terms appear to be used promiscuously, in a general sense, and for the sake of variety.

ALEPH.—PART I.

1. *Blessed* are *the undefiled,* Heb. *perfect,* or, *sincere, in the way, who walk in the law of the* LORD.

By sin, misery entered into the world; holiness alone, therefore, can lead us to happiness. "The law of Jehovah" is the path of life, and by "walking in the way," we shall attain to the end. But, alas! we are out of the way; we have walked in the law of sin, after the lusts of the flesh; who will direct and strengthen us to walk in the law of God, after the desire of the Spirit? We are fallen from our integrity; who will raise us again? The Gospel, which was preached to Abraham before the Mosaic dispensation, and which was prefigured and believed under it, returneth us, to all these questions, answers of peace. The Redeemer hath prevailed for the pardon of our errors; the Redeemer hath raised us from our fallen state; he hath reconducted us to the path of life; in his name we arise and walk; he maketh us righteous, and, consequently, he maketh us "blessed." For, "Blessed are the sincere in the way, who walk in the law of Jehovah."

2. *Blessed* are *they that keep his testimonies,* and that *seek him with their whole heart.*

The divine revelations and institutions, whether of the old or the new law, are called God's "testimonies;" they are the witnesses of his will, and the pledges of his love. They are committed to the church, as a precious deposit, or trust, to be by her children "kept," and observed. In and by these God is to be sought; "they that seek him with their whole heart," with ardent and undivided affection, fail not to find him, as an instructor and a comforter; and they who find him, find all things, and are "blessed" indeed.

3. *They also* that *do no iniquity, they* that *walk in his ways.*

O blissful state of those, who are redeemed from the earth, and all earthly desires; who are delivered from the dominion of sin; who "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth," and, like Zacharias and Elisabeth, "walk in the statutes and ordinances of the Lord blameless:" Luke, i. 6. Enrol us, O Lord, in the happy number of these thy servants; pardon our offences; give us a new nature, and new desires,

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averse from sin, and inclined to sanctity and guard us, that the wicked one touch us not.

4. *Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently.*

He who made us, and redeemed us, hath a double right to our service. We are not our own, having been bought with the blood of our Lord; his will, therefore, and not our own, is to be done by us. And his will is, that we should "keep his precepts diligently," because in "keeping" them, and in keeping them "diligently," so as not to halt between God and the world, but to serve one master only, doth our happiness consist. Now, when the commands of our Superior, and our greatest Benefactor, of our Friend, our Father, and our God, coincide with our own interest temporal and eternal, what pretext can there be for disobedience and rebellion?

5. *O that my ways were directed,* or, *prepared and established, to keep thy statutes!*

The faithful soul, enraptured with the contemplation of that blessedness which is the consequence of serving God, but conscious, at the same time, of an inability to attain it, sighs after the refreshing and strengthening influences of divine grace. She beholdeth her Saviour afar off; she beholdeth the beauty and glorious majesty of his heavenly kingdom; she beholdeth the way which leads to it; but she hath not power to walk therein. This consideration causeth her to groan earnestly within herself, and at length to breathe forth a wish that the Spirit of truth and love would fix and establish her in a holy course of thinking, speaking, and acting, upon all occasions, and would prevent her from turning aside out of it, to the right hand or to the left.

6. *Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments.*

ALL the commandments have the same author, and the same sanction. He who thinketh to atone for the breach of one, by the observation of another; he who reserveth to himself a licence of indulging any favorite, darling lust, while, in general, he preserveth the appearance of an exemplary conduct, is a hypocrite, and, unless he repent, will be brought to "shame," if not before men here, yet before men and angels hereafter. "Shame" is the fruit of sin; confidence is the effect of righteousness. Wherefore, in all our proceedings, let us "have respect," not to the opinions of men, to the corrupt customs of the world, or to the deceitful suggestions of our own hearts, but "to the commandments, to all the commandments of God;" let us, as St. John exhorteth, "abide in Christ; that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming." 1 John, ii. 28.

7. *I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments.*

Confidence in God will always be productive of joy, and undissembled "praise" will accompany true conversion. The scriptures are styled God's "righteous judgments," as containing an account of his decrees and determinations concerning us, with a history of cases and precedents, entered upon record for our admonition. By these we are to form our opinions, and to regulate our conduct. And when we shall have so "learned" these, as to walk according to them, we shall praise God with an "upright heart;" our tongues will utter what our hearts feel.

8. *I will keep thy statutes: O forsake me not utterly.*

The result of our meditations on God's word, and on the advantages of studying, in order to observe its directions, should always be a resolution so to do, and a prayer for grace to execute that resolution. Lord, we "will keep thy statutes;" for love can do all things, when thou hast shed it abroad in our hearts. "Love worketh no ill; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law," Rom. xiii. 10; and mercy will accept what grace enableth us to perform. Be thou, therefore, ever with us, and "forsake us not;" or if, at any time, to try our faith, and to exercise our patience, thou shouldest depart from us, and leave us to ourselves for a time, short be thy absence, and speedy thy return! "O forsake us not utterly!"

BETH.—PART II.

9. *Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed* thereto *according to thy word.*

YOUTH enters upon the journey of life, headstrong and inexperienced, with a bias of original corruption, and all the passions awake. In such circumstances, how shall a young man direct his steps, so as to "escape the pollution that is in the world through lust?" 2 Pet. i. 4. He must, for this purpose, take with him the directions to be found in the Scriptures of truth. "I have written unto you, young men," says the beloved disciple, "because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one." He who became man for our salvation, passed through this state of youth, undefiled, that

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he might, as it were, reclaim and consecrate it anew to God. Let every young man often meditate on this circumstance.

10. *With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments.*

Despairing of sufficient assistance from any other quarter, because no one else can either show us the way to heaven, or enable us to walk therein, even if it could be shown, "with our whole heart have we sought thee," O God, thy direction, and thine aid; and thou hast promised, that they who "seek shall find:" like sheep without a shepherd are we given to stray; O preserve us from error in principle, and in practice; "let us not wander from thy commandments."

11. *Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.*

The young man who would cleanse his way, and take heed according to God's word, must "lay up that word in his heart;" for from the heart are the issues of life," the thoughts, the words, and the actions; when God ruleth in the heart by his word and Spirit, these become his subjects; then "the kingdom of heaven is within us," and all is obedience, peace, and love. Thou art our King, O Lord Jesu; suffer no usurper to possess thy place in our affections; permit no other Lord to have dominion over us.

12. *Blessed* art *thou, O* LORD*: teach me thy statutes.*

He who is "blessed" can make us so; he who delighteth to communicate "blessing," will do it, if we ask him, by "teaching us his statutes," which conform us to his nature, that we may live his life, and bless his name for ever. When the word of God is our lesson, the Spirit of God must be our Master.

13. *With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth.*

The best sign that God hath "taught us his statutes," and the greatest inducement to him to teach us still more and more, is a readiness to make others partakers of those blessings, which we ourselves have received from him. Jehovah fashions the "lips" of man, and he expects that they should be employed in his service. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," and the stream will always show the nature of the fountain. When we make the Scriptures the subject of our conversation, we glorify God, we edify our neighbors, and we improve ourselves.

14. *I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as* much as *in all riches.*

Truth and holiness afford to the sincere believer a pleasure more exquisite, as well as more solid and enduring, than that which a miser feels at the acquisition of his darling wealth. Let us no longer envy the joys of worldly men, no longer be chagrined at the prosperity of the wicked. The "true riches" we may always acquire; and, surely, as much as the heaven is higher than the earth, so much are heavenly joys above earthly, in kind, degree, and duration.

15. *I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways.*

Meditation is that exercise of the mind, whereby it recalls a known truth, as some kinds of creatures do their food, to be ruminated upon, until all the nutritious parts are extracted, and fitted for the purposes of life. By study we lay in knowledge, by meditation we reduce that knowledge to practice. And we have then duly "meditated on God's precepts," when in all our proceedings we "have respect unto his ways," comparing our actions with the rule of his word.

16. *I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word.*

By frequent meditation and continual practice, the divine "statutes" will become our "delight;" and from the pleasures, as well as from the cares of the world, we shall gladly fly to THEM for recreation and comfort. Of holy exercises there is great variety, and spiritual joys are without number. Lord, make us to "delight ourselves in thy statutes," and when we delight in what we learn, we shall easily retain it in memory; "we shall not forget thy word."

GIMEL.—PART III.

17. *Deal bountifully with thy servant,* that *I may live, and keep thy word.*

In the foregoing parts of the Psalm, we have heard the beliver declaring the excellency of God's word, and expressing both his desire and his resolution to observe its directions. He now beseecheth God to remove all impediments, and to accomplish this work in him. And as a man must "live," in order to "work," the first petition is, that God would "deal with his servant," according to the measures of grace and mercy, enabling him to "live" the life of faith, and strengthening him by the Spirit of might in the inner man, to "keep the word" of truth, and to walk in the commandments of his blessed Master all his days.

18. *Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.*

So far are we naturally from being able

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to "keep" the word, that we are not able to understand it. The law of God is full of divine and spiritual truths, concealed under literal histories, visible signs, and external ceremonies. To discern these, נִפְלָאוֹת, "wondrous," because the hidden, mysterious "things," our "eyes," the eyes of our understanding, must be "unveiled;" that "veil" must be taken off, which St. Paul affirmeth to be upon the hearts of the Jews, "in reading the old Testament," and which will continue there, until they turn to the Lord Jesus Christ. Then the veil will be taken away, and they will behold him, and the redemption by him, as prefigured in their law, and foretold by their prophets.* Pride, prejudice, and interest will compose a veil, through which a Christian shall see as little of the New Testament, as a Jew doth of the Old. Lord, convince us of our blindness, and restore us to our sight.

19. *I* am *a stranger in the earth; hide not thy commandments from me.*

The above request for divine illumination is enforced by this argument, that the petitioner is a "stranger," and a sojourner upon "the earth;" he is travelling, through a foreign country, to his native city, where are his kindred, his treasure, and his heart; as a sojourner, he hath renounced the world, which is therefore become his enemy; as a stranger, he is fearful of losing his way; on these accounts he requesteth, that God would compensate the loss of earthly comforts, by affording the light of heaven; that he would not "hide his commandments," but show and teach him those steps, by which he may ascend towards heaven, rejoicing in hope of future glory.

20. *My soul breaketh for the longing* that it hath *unto thy judgments at all times.*

Another argument here urged, is that "longing" desire which the soul hath, during her state of pilgrimage below, unto the revelation of God's will. Grieved and vexed at the prospect of sin, vanity, and folly, and finding nothing below that will satisfy the desires of an immortal spirit, she setteth her affections on the better things above, which are proposed in the Scriptures as the proper objects of our wishes. Her appetite for the divine Word is keen, as that of hunger or thirst, and "hope deferred maketh the heart sick." This disposition is not a transient fit, but it is constant and uniform "at all times."

21. *Thou hast rebuked the proud* that are *cursed, which do err from thy commandments.*

The consideration of the wretched condition of impenitent sinners, is another reason, why we entreat God to set and to keep us in the way of his commandments. "Pride" produceth "error," and obstinacy in that error; obstinate transgressors reject the call, the covenant, and the terms of the Gospel; to such the "curse" of the law is ratified and sealed, and mercy consigns them over to justice, which seldom fails to give them some "rebukes" even in this world, for a foretaste to them, and a warning to others.

22. *Remove from me reproach and contempt; for I have kept thy testimonies.*

"Reproach and contempt" are liberally bestowed by the world upon men who, being not of it, reprove its deeds by their exemplary conduct. These, to beginners more especially, are sore lets and hindrances in the way of duty; and, after the example of David, we may beseech God to "remove" them from us, when we suffer them in his cause, and know ourselves to be innocent of the crimes laid to our charge. In the mean time, to comfort ourselves under them, let us remember, that HE, who alone, in the strict and unlimited sense of the words, could say, "I have kept thy testimonies," sustained the utmost degree of "reproach and contempt" for our sakes, and was patient and resigned under it all, until God "removed" it from him by a glorious resurrection. There remaineth likewise a resurrection for the mystical body of Christ; and then, "Wisdom will be justified of all her children."

23. *Princes also did sit* and *speak against me:* but *thy servant did meditate in thy statutes.*

"Princes" and rulers have often "sate" in council upon the "servants" of God, and "spoken," in judgment, false things "against them," as they did against their blessed Master in the days of his flesh. David hath taught us how to act in such circumstances. We are not to renounce the creed, or the commandments, should it so happen that "the rulers and the Pharisees" neither believe the former, nor observe the latter; but rather, should "meditate," more than ever, in the Scriptures; that we may draw from thence comfort in the troubles, and direction in the difficulties, which persecution bringeth upon us; always bearing in mind, when princes command anything contrary to the word of God, that our ser-

* "Revela oculos meos;" aperi, dispelle umbras, tolle velamentum, quo spirituales oculi conteguntur. "Considerabo mirabilia:" ut penitus introspiciam, non literam tantum, ac velut corticem legis, sed arcana spiritualia, puta in sabbati requiem sempiternam, simplicitatem in azymis, in victimis obedientiam, et ubique Christum. BOSSUET.

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vice is due to a higher Master; "THY SERVANT did meditate in thy statutes."

24. *Thy testimonies also* are *my delight*, and *my counsellors.*

Pleasure and wisdom, as the world hath ordered matters, are almost incompatible; insomuch that Solomon, relating the experience he had of voluptuousness, mentions it as a thing out of the ordinary course, that "his wisdom" all the time "remained with him:" Eccles. ii. 9. But they who meditate in the word of God, find a pleasure, which hath wisdom for its inseparable companion. Their sorrow is dispelled, and their doubts are resolved. For how can he be sorrowful, who sits by the fountain of joy? How can he be long in doubt, who hath the prophets and apostles for his counsellors?

DALETH. PART IV.

25. *My soul cleaveth to the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word.*

The Psalmist, in a state of affliction and humiliation, still seeketh relief, by prayer, from the Scriptures. His circumstances vary, but his affection to the word of God continueth the same. Every one, whose affections are set on things below, hath reason to exclaim with David, "My soul cleaveth to the dust." From this kind of death we are "quickened," or made alive, by the Gospel, through that same Spirit which raised Christ from the dead, and which shall raise us also at the last day. Then soul and body, perfected together, shall take their final farewell of earth, and ascend to heaven, where the soul shall feel no passion but the love of God, and the body shall have no employment but to express it.

26. *I have declared my ways, and thou heardest me; teach me thy statutes.*

We should freely and ingenuously "declare" to God in prayer our sins, our temptations, our sorrows, and our undertakings; it argues love, confidence, and sincerity, so to do; it is a means of acquainting us with our own state, of which generally we are ignorant; and it will not fail to procure us those aids from above, of which we stand in need. God will "hear" us; he will pardon our offences, strengthen us in our trials, dispel our grief, and prosper the work of our hands upon us. These mercies, when received, should incline us to walk worthy of them, and, for that purpose, to beg the farther instruction and direction of the divine Spirit: "I have declared my ways, and thou heardest me—teach me thy statutes."

27. *Make me to understand the way of thy precepts: so shall I talk*, or, *meditate, of thy wondrous works*, or, *thy mysteries.*

The heart of the troubled Psalmist is intent upon duty, and the deliverance which he chiefly requesteth is that from ignorance and error. True knowledge cometh from God, and it cannot be too often desired of him. It is pleasant as the light, extensive as the heavens, and more profitable than the treasures of eastern kings. He who is led to "understand" the celestial "mysteries" of the Scriptures, will never want subjects for "meditation," and should never permit those subjects either to slip out of his mind, or to lie unimproved in it.

28. *My soul melteth for heaviness: strengthen thou me according to thy word.*

Let us not marvel, if sin bring us to the knowledge of sorrow, since he who "knew no sin," was yet, on our account, so intimately "acquainted with grief." In the garden, his soul "melted for heaviness," and there appeared an angel from heaven "strengthening him:" Luke, xxii. 43. Our transgressions deserve an eternity of sorrow; let us not, therefore, repine at any part of it that may fall to our share in time. No, blessed Jesu! let us suffer with thee, as both a means and a pledge of our future glorification with thee. Only "strengthen us, according to" the promises in "thy word." In this life, all we ask is faith and patience; faith, to assure us that thou orderest all things for the best; and patience, to preserve that faith. These were the provisions with which thy best-beloved servants of old travelled through this mortal life. Enable us, upon whom the ends of the world are come, to do the same; that so, when the days of our earthly pilgrimage shall be happily accomplished, we may sit down, with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in thy heavenly kingdom.

29. *Remove from me the way of lying: and grant me thy law graciously.* 30. *I have chosen the way of truth: thy judgments have I laid* before me.

It is plain that "the way of truth," in the latter of these two verses, is opposed to "the way of lying," or of falsehood, in the former. The one comprehends every thing in doctrine and practice that is right, and therefore "true;" the other denotes every thing which is wrong, and therefore "false." Of these two ways man hath his choice. God points out to him the former by his word, and offers to conduct him in it by his Spirit. Satan shows him the latter, and endeavors to seduce him into it by his temptations. The Psalmist declareth himself to have "chosen" God's way, and to

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have "laid" the Scriptures "before him," as the chart by which he was to direct his course. He therefore prays that the other way may be far "removed" from him; and that God would vouchsafe him such a thorough acquaintance with the "way" of truth, as might prevent him from ever wandering into the path of error. How much depends upon the road we choose! How difficult is it, in a divided and distracted world, to choose aright! Yet this choice, so important, so difficult, frequently remains to be made by us, when we have neither judgment to choose, nor strength to travel!

31. *I have stuck unto thy testimonies: O* LORD, *put me not to shame.*

Having once chosen our road, it remains that we persevere in it; since better had it been for us never to have known the way of truth, than to forsake it, when known; and we have the same reasons to go on, which induced us to begin; nay, though the love of the world may require novelty and variety to support it, yet, in the blessed union of the soul with its Redeemer, true affection will increase with time and acquaintance. The Psalmist doth not only say, "I have followed," but "I have stuck unto thy testimonies;" I have adhered so closely and firmly to them, that temptation has in vain essayed to allure, and persecution as vainly attempted to force, me from them. And therefore he beseecheth God so to continue his grace and favor, that he may never, by falling from his steadfastness, disgrace his Master, his cause, his brethren, himself, nor be put to shame at the last day. "O LORD, put me not to shame!"

32. *I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.*

The true Christian is always proceeding in the way of godliness, though not always with equal pace. In grief, whether for temporal or spiritual losses, the heart is contracted, and the spirits are all summoned home to comfort and support it, so that the faculties are left feeble and sluggish; and then the progress can be but slow. This was the Psalmist's case. But even then he promises that, when God, by sending him joy and gladness, should "enlarge his heart," dilate his spirits, and put life and strength into his actions, he would quicken his pace in proproportion, and, with renewed vigor and alacrity, "run the way" of the divine "commandments," until it should have brought him to rest and felicity in the bosom of God.

TWENTY-FIFTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

HE.—PART V.

33. *Teach me, O* LORD, *the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it* unto *the end.*

Instruction from above is necessary for the children of God, while they continue in this world. The more we know, the more we shall desire to know; we shall beg a daily supply of grace, as well as of bread, and a taste of the cluster of Eshcol will make us long after the vintage of Canaan: Numb. xiii. 23. Religion is the art of holy living, and then only known when it is practised; as he is not a master of music who can read the notes which compose it, but he who has learned how to take a lesson readily from the book, and play it on his instrument; after which, the pleasure it affords will be a sufficient motive for continuing so to do. "Teach me, O God, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end."

34. *Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with* my *whole heart.*

Much "understanding" is needful in order to the observation of the law, that we may know what is commanded, and what is forbidden, and how far; that we may avoid the snares laid for us in the way of duty; that we may respect things according to their due rank and worth; that we may do good works in their proper time, place, and manner; above all, that the affections may be directed by the judgment, and not the judgment by the affections. The law cannot be observed, unless it be understood; and it is understood in vain, unless it be observed; or rather, if it be indeed understood, if there be upon the mind, at all times, a full conviction of divine truths, and their excellency, not only in themselves, but compared with the offers of the world, the flesh, and the devil, then it will certainly operate in hearty obedience. "Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart."

35. *Make me to go,* or, *conduct me, in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight.*

He who teacheth us the way to heaven, must also "conduct" us in it, and the same grace must give light and strength. The Scripture is our rule, the Spirit is our guide; and, from beginning to end, it is God who inclines, prepares, and enables us "to go in the" clean and pleasant "path of his commandments;" a path which leads us far from the noise and pollution of the world, through a paradise of promises and comforts, grateful as the fragrance of early spring, or the incense

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ascending from the holy altar. Happy the soul that can say to God, "therein do I delight:" which is, at the same time, a reason for her to ask, and for him to grant, a continuance and perseverance therein.

36. *Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.*

The wit of man may conceive, and his tongue may utter, great things of God and holiness, while his heart is averse to both; therefore David saith, not only "give me understanding," but "incline my heart." Our true characters are formed by the desires of our hearts, which, not finding satisfaction in themselves, must seek it in something without them. The world offers itself first; and custom, as well as nature, inclineth us to the love of that, and of money, which commandeth all things in it. Such love is contrary to the love of God, being one of the thorns which choke the seed, and render it unfruitful. Therefore the Psalmist requesteth, that his heart may be "inclined to the divine testimonies, and not to covetousness." And as God only can change the disposition of the heart, to God he preferreth his petition. It is to be observed, that by the words, "Incline not my heart to covetousness," is meant, suffer not my heart to be inclined," or, "give it not over to covetousness."

37. *Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity:* and *quicken thou me in thy way.*

"Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity;" and what is there else on earth to behold? What is there which, when possessed, doth not disappoint the expectation conceived of it, the possessors themselves being judges? Solomon took an inventory of the world, and all the best things in it; he cast up the account, and the sum total was VANITY. The "eye" is the grand inlet of temptation, and by "beholding," we come to desire and long after the objects of sense; from which time our affection toward the objects of faith waxeth cold. "Turn away our eyes," therefore, O Lord, "from beholding vanity, and quicken us in thy way;" mortify the flesh, and the spirit shall live.

38. *Stablish thy word unto thy servant, who* is devoted *to thy fear.*

The "word" here intended is the word of promise, which the believer entreateth God to "stablish," confirm, or accomplish, to him by his sanctification, that so he may walk in the way of truth and life. He pleadeth his title to the promise, as a "servant" of God, and one who "feared" to offend him.

39. *Turn away my reproach which I fear: for thy judgments* are *good.*

The "reproach" which we have all most reason to dread, and to pray that God would keep far from us here and hereafter, is that of having forsaken and apostatized from those statutes and "judgments" revealed in the Scriptures, which we own to be so "good," so pleasant, and so profitable.

40. *Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: quicken me in thy righteousness.*

The Psalmist appealeth to God, the searcher of hearts, for the truth of the protestation he was about to make, that the desire of his soul was toward the divine Word; not only toward the promises, to believe and embrace them, but also toward the "precepts," to observe and to do them. He therefore prayeth, with confidence, that God would finish the work he had begun, and enable him to carry his wishes into execution, by continually "quickening" and enlivening him more through grace, to finish his course in "righteousness," and to obtain that crown which is to be the reward of it.

VAU.—PART VI.

41. *Let thy mercies come also unto me, O* LORD, even *thy salvation, according to thy word.*

Persecution and affliction, of which they never fail, in some way or other, to have their share who live godly in Christ Jesus, shall teach us, like David, to fly for refuge to that "mercy," from whence proceedeth all "salvation," temporal and eternal; and to pray, without ceasing, for the accomplishment of that "Word," which promiseth to the people of God deliverance out of all their troubles.

42. *So shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me: for I trust in thy word.*

A believer, trusting in the promises of God when the whole world hath forsaken him, and no sign or probability appear of their being fulfilled, is always, among the wicked, an object of scorn and "reproach." Such was David, when Shimei cursed him. Such was our blessed Master, when men said, "He trusted in God that he would deliver him, let him deliver him now if he will have him." And his disciples are not to expect better usage. "Therefore," saith one of them, "we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God:" 1 Tim. iv. 10. To silence these reproaches, we beseech God to manifest his mercy in our salvation. The resurrection of Jesus was an "answer" to his blasphemers; and the mouth of all wickedness will be stopped at the last day.

43. *And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth: for I have hoped in thy judgments.*

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In the meantime, while affliction presseth hard upon us, while our deliverance is deferred, and the enemy is suffered to reproach and blaspheme, our prayer must be, that God would give us courage, and utterance, still to confess him before men, and boldly to speak his "word of truth," for the edification of some, and the confutation of others; as knowing, that our faith is not vain, nor shall we be disappointed of our "hope," since both are built upon the "judgments," or revealed decrees, of him who can neither err nor deceive.

44. *So shall I keep thy law continually, for ever and ever.*

By means of strength and power from above, we shall be enabled to serve God, in adversity, as well as in prosperity; and amidst all difficulties and dangers, into which the path of duty may lead us, Charity will persevere in it, till, arriving at the gate of heaven, and there taking leave of her companions and fellow travellers, Faith and Hope, she shall enter those blissful regions, to perform to eternity that perfect will of God, which the infirmities of fallen nature prevented her from having so fully performed here below.

45. *And I will walk at liberty, for I seek thy precepts.*

No external pressure can take away that spiritual "liberty," which the faithful Christian experienceth when he hath made an open confession of the truth, and determined at all events to do his duty. Then he is no longer straightened by fear, but set at large by love. "The truth maketh him free, and he walketh in the liberty of the children of God;" a liberty which they only obtain "who seek his precepts," and, by the performance of them, are rescued from the bondage both of tyranical desires and slavish fears.

46. *I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed.*

A prophet may be called "before kings," either in the course of his office, to instruct them, or else in a judiciary way, to give an account of his faith. In either case, if he "walketh at liberty," he will speak of God's testimonies," with due reverence to the person and authority of his prince, but as one who is neither afraid nor "ashamed" to declare the whole counsel of heaven to any being upon earth.

47. *And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved.* 48. *My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved: and I will meditate in thy statutes.*

He who would preach boldly to others, must himself "delight" in the practice of what he preacheth. If there be in us a new nature, it will "love the commandments of God," as being congenial to it: on that which we love, we shall continually be "meditating;" and our meditation will end in action; we shall lift up the hands which hang down, Heb. xii. 12, that they may "work the works of God, while it is day; because the night cometh, when no man can work." John, ix. 4.

ZAIN.—PART VIII.

49. *Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.*

God promiseth salvation before he giveth it, to exercise our faith, to prove our sincerity, to perfect our patience. For these purposes, he seemeth to have sometimes forgotten his word, and to have deserted those whom he had engaged to succor and relieve; in which case, he would have us as it were, to remind him of his promise, and solicit his performance of it. The Psalmist here instructeth us to prefer our petition upon these grounds; first, that God cannot prove false to his own word; "Remember the word unto thy servant:" secondly, that he will never disappoint an expection which himself hath raised; "upon which thou hast caused me to hope."

50. *This* is *my comfort in affliction: for thy word hath quickened me.*

While performance is delayed, we "rejoice in hope;" Rom. xii. 12. and the promise is our comfort in affliction; a comfort, divine, strong, lasting; a comfort that will not, like all others, fail us when we most want it, in the day of sickness, and at the hour of death; but will always keep pace with our necessities, increasing in proportion as the pleasures of the world and the flesh decrease in us, and then becoming complete, when they are no more. So powerful is the word of God to revive us, when dead, either in sins, or in sorrow; "Thy word hath quickened me."

51. *The proud hath had me greatly in derision:* yet *have I not declined from thy law.*

A true servant of God believeth the promises, and practiseth the precepts of his blessed Master. The haughty infidel will scoff at him for one part of his condnct; the insolent worlding will ridicule him for the other. But neither will induce him to disbelieve, or to disobey. Let us be certain that we have the divine "law" for our warrant in what we believe, and in what we do: and then, let not the "derision of the proud" prevail upon us to "decline from it."

52. *I remembered thy judgments of old, O* LORD: *and have comforted myself.*

The great remedy against that temptation

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which ariseth from the reproaches of our scornful and insulting adversaries, is here prescribed, namely, a "remembrance of God's judgments of old," whether we understand the "judgments" of his mouth, or those of his hand; his righteous decrees for the punishment of bad, and reward of good men, or the many and wonderful instances of his executing those decrees, from the beginning of the world, recorded in the sacred history. These are sources of real and endless "comfort" upon such occasions; because nothing can happen to us, which hath not happened to God's people "of old;" no case, of which there is not a precedent in Scripture, where we may read the process of similar trials, their issue, and the final sentence of the judge, who is still the same, and whose rule of procedure and determination is invariable.

53. *Horror hath taken hold upon me, because of the wicked that forsake thy law.*

The consequence of a due meditation on God's judgments, will be a compassion for the "wicked," on whom those judgments, in the end, fall; so that instead of feeling for ourselves, on account of the injuries they do us, we shall feel for them, who are thereby drawing down vengeance and destruction on their own heads. "Daughters of Jerusalem," said the blessed Jesus, when led to be crucified, "weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children." Luke, xxiii. 28.

54. *Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.*

The soul, which descended from above, and longs to return thither again, is a stranger and a sojourner upon earth. The body is "the house of her pilgrimage," in which she is confined during her state of exile. And, how harsh soever the usage may be which she receiveth from the world, she ever findeth joy and comfort, as once did the fugitive and wandering son of Jesse, in making God's "statutes" the subjects of her psalms, and hymns, and spiritual "songs," until death shall restore her to liberty. Then, ascending to heaven from whence she came, and, like the early lark, singing as she ascends, she will seek her native abode, there to celebrate her redemption from the earth, and to chant forth the praises of Him who hath redeemed her, in a new song, before the throne.

55. *I have remembered thy name, O* LORD, *in the night, and have kept thy law.*

By the "name" of God, his nature, so much at least of it as we are concerned to know, and are capable of receiving, is revealed to us. Such a love had the Psalmist for it on that account, that, as in the day God's statutes were his songs, in the night God's name was the subject of his meditation. With his tongue he praised him in the day, with his heart he desired him in the night-watches. At night, the dissipation, noise, and hurry of business ceases; external silence produceth internal calmness and composure, inviting us to celestial contemplation; the world is dead to us, and we are dead to the world; the soul is then most alive, and seemeth to experience a foretaste of that time, when the body and its concerns shall no more molest and impede her. The good effect of hours thus secretly passed in holy exercises, will appear openly in our lives and conversations: "I have remembered thy name, O LORD, in the night, and," as the fruit of it, "have kept thy law."

56. *This I had, because I kept thy commandments.*

As one sin is often the consequence and the punishment of another, so one act of obedience is the issue and the reward of another; and, to him who hath well used the grace already received, shall more be given. "This I had," this ability to perform my duty, and to delight in the performance of it day and night, was vouchsafed unto me, "because I kept thy commandments," because I was not heretofore disobedient, but employed the strength with which thou, O Lord, hast endued me, not in doing mine own will, but thine.

CHETH.—PART VIII.

57. Thou art *my portion, O* LORD: *I have said that I would keep thy words.*

Happy the man, who can sincerely say, "Thou art my portion, O LORD;" I have considered, and made my choice; from henceforth, I renounce all things for the love of thee; thou art sufficient for me; thee only I desire to enjoy, and, therefore, thee only I desire to please; "I have said that I would keep thy word."

58. *I entreated thy favor with* my *whole heart: be merciful unto me, according to thy word.*

He who hath chosen God for "his portion," will earnestly seek his "favor," and the light of his countenance; he who hath promised and vowed to "keep the words" of God, hath need to seek that favor and that light, that he may have grace and power to fulfil his engagements. Mercy is the sole fountain of every good gift for which we ask, and God's promise the only ground upon which we ask it; "be merciful unto me, according to thy word."

59. *I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.*

The Psalmist did not content himself with barely praying for strength and grace, but his faith, relying on the word of promise, put

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itself in motion. He considered his "ways," his course of thinking, speaking, and acting; how far he had proceeded in it, and whither it led him; and this consideration produced a conversion of the whole man, of the heart and its affections, from the creature to the Creator, as he hath revealed himself in the Scriptures of truth; "I turned my feet unto thy testimonies."

60. *I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.*

A true penitent suffereth no time to be lost between his good resolutions and the performance of them. "Draw me," saith the church, "and we will RUN after thee:" Cant. i. 4. Andrew, Peter, and others, stayed not for a second call from Christ, but followed him immediately upon the first. By deferring our return to duty, we lose many comfortable fruits, which it would have produced both in ourselves and others, while the difficulties of ever returning, and the danger of never returning, are daily and hourly increasing.

61. *The bands*, or, *troops, of the ungodly have robbed me;* but *I have not forgotten thy law.*

To be robbed, or plundered of his possessions in this world, was by no means a case peculiar to David. The primitive Christians were continually so treated; and our Lord gives all his disciples warning to stand prepared for such events, ready in disposition, in heart and mind, to quit all, as they who first followed him literally did. The apostle tells us of some, who not only bore patiently, but even "took joyfully, the spoiling of their goods:" the reason he assigns for so extraordinary a behavior, deserves to be noted and remembered; "knowing that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance:" Heb. x. 34. They who part with earth to gain heaven, and exchange the world for its Maker, certainly lose nothing by the bargain. Nay, there will come an hour, when, for that foretaste of glory which a good conscience affordeth to its happy possessor, the dearest lover of mammon would joyfully give up all the gold of Peru, and all the diamonds of Indostan.

62. *At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee, because of thy righteous judgments.*

So far were temporal losses from causing the Psalmist to forsake God, that he sought him the more earnestly and fervently on that account, rising at "midnight to give thanks" for all his "righteous judgments" and dispensations towards his servants. Thus Paul and Silas, not only impoverished, but imprisoned, for the testimony of Jesus, yet in that situation, with their feet fast in the stocks, sang "praises at midnight," thereby turning their night into day, and their prison into a paradise; when, lo, their hallelujahs ascended to heaven, and God arose to judgment; the earth trembled, the doors were opened, the chains fell off, the gaoler and his family were converted, and the apostles set at liberty. And although there be no obligation upon men to "rise at midnight," in order to "give thanks;" yet, if they who awake at that, or any other time, would accustom their hearts, at least, to so divine an exercise, they would find it always productive of the most comfortable effects.

63. *I* am *a companion of all* them *that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.*

As no sufferings should make us neglect our intercourse with God, so neither should they tempt us to forsake the communion of saints, or fellowship of them who "fear God, and work righteousness." These are knit together in love, as members of the same mystical body, insomuch that "if one member suffer, or be honored, all the members should suffer or be honored with it;" these we should own at all times, in prosperity, and in adversity; with these should our acquaintance and conversation be, for the mutual improvement and consolation of them and of ourselves. Of such was David a "companion," and such the Redeemer himself "is not ashamed to call brethren." Heb. ii. 11.

64. *The earth, O* LORD, *is full of thy mercy: teach me thy statutes.*

Heaven and earth, and all that are therein, declare, from day to day, the "mercy" of their Creator and Preserver, which is "over all his works." And his goodness, thus displayed through the outward and visible world, forbids us to doubt of his loving kindness towards those immortal spirits, which, in tenements of mortal clay, make, for a while, their abode here below; during which short period, they beseech him earnestly to grant them such a portion of that saving knowledge, which is his gift, as may secure to them, when they shall depart hence, a place in a happier country, and a more enduring city. "Teach me thy statutes!"

TETH.—PART IX.

65. *Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O* LORD, *according to thy word.*

As the sense of our wants should prepare the mind for prayer, so gratitude for blessings received should tune the heart to praise. In preferring our petitions, self-love may sometimes have a share; but thankfulness is the offspring of an ingenuous spirit, and the love of God. Let a man carefully recount the divine mercies shown to him from

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his birth, considering withal how unworthy he hath been of the least of those mercies, as also how far preferable his state is to that of many others; and he will find reason "in all things to give thanks," to acknowledge, with David, the goodness and truth of Jehovah, and to say, "Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O LORD, according to thy word."

66. *Teach me good judgment and knowledge: for I have believed thy commandments.*

From thanksgiving, the Psalmist returneth again to prayer, as, while we continue in this world, we must all do. The gift, for which he now prayeth, is that of "a good judgment with knowledge;" as the former must enable us to make a proper use of the latter. The word טוּב, which is here translated "judgment," signifies bodily "taste," and that faculty in the mind which answers to it, the faculty of discerning, distinguishing, and judging rightly of things moral and spiritual, as the palate doth of meats, their different flavors and qualities. Without this taste, or discretion, we mistake falsehood for truth in our studies, and wrong for right in our practice; superstition and enthusiasm may pass with us for religion, or else licentiousness may intrude itself upon us, under the name and notion of liberty; in a word, our learning and knowledge prove useless, if not prejudicial to us. A sound mind therefore should, above all things, be desired of God in our prayers; and those prayers will be heard, when we can sincerely profess a readiness to be directed by God's laws, through faith in their author, his promises and threatenings; on which ground David urgeth his request; "for I have believed thy commandments."

67. *Before I was afflicted, I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.*

We collect from this verse, that prosperity is too often the parent of sin; that adversity is, first, its punishment, then, its remedy; and that every considerate man, who hath been afflicted, will thankfully acknowledge as much. "When afflictions fail to have their due effect, the case is desperate. They are the last remedy which indulgent Providence uses; and if they fail, we must languish and die in misery and contempt. Vain men! how seldom do we know what to wish or to pray for! When we pray against misfortunes, and when we fear them most, we want them most. The shortest and the best prayer which we can address to Him who knows our wants, and our ignorance in asking, is this—Thy will be done." Lord Bolingbroke's Reflections on Exile, p. 276.

68. *Thou* art *good, and doest good: teach me thy statutes.*

In other words, as Bishop Patrick hath well connected and paraphrased it, "Thou art in thine own nature kind and good; and nothing else can proceed from thee, who designest our good, even when thou afflictest us; take what methods thou pleasest with me, only teach me effectually to do as thou wouldst have me."

69. *The proud have formed a lie against me:* but *I will keep thy precepts with* my *whole heart.*

Every disciple of Christ, who, like his Master, goeth contrary to the ways of the world, and condemneth them, must expect to be like that Master, slandered and calumniated by the world. To such slanders and calumnies, a good life is the best answer. When a friend once told Plato, what scandalous stories his enemies had propagated concerning him, "I will live so," replied that great philosopher, "that nobody shall believe them."

70. *Their heart is as fat as grease;* but *I delight in thy law.*

"The fatness of the heart" implieth, in this place, two things in those of whom it is affirmed; luxury, and its consequence, insensibility to those spiritual and divine truths, which are not only the study, but the "delight" of temperate and holy persons, who gladly fly from large companies, full tables, costly meats, and rich wines, to enjoy in private the more exalted pleasures of abstinence, meditation, and prayer.

71. It is *good for me that I have been afflicted: that I might learn thy statutes.*

God's statutes are best learned in the school of affliction, because by affliction the great impediments to our learning them are removed; pride is subdued, and concupiscence is extinguished. "He that hath suffered in the flesh," saith an apostle, "hath ceased from sin:" 1 Pet. iv. 1. and in an immunity from sin consisteth one of the greatest felicities of heaven, which thus descends into the afflicted soul, so as to render even the state of sickness itself, in some sort, desirable. Strange as this proposition may appear, the reader will find its truth demonstrated, by the inimitable Bishop Jeremy Taylor, in that truly golden tract, "The Rule and Exercises of Holy Dying," chap. iii. sect. 6. on "The Advantages of Sickness."

72. *The law of thy mouth* is *better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.*

Affliction taketh from us the inclination to offend, and it giveth us, in return, a knowledge of that law which "is better," and

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which, when we are thoroughly acquainted with it, we shall esteem to be better, "than thousands of gold and silver;" better in its nature, for it is from heaven, they are from the earth; better in its use, for it bringeth salvation to our souls, whereas they can only procure sustenance for the body; better in point of duration, for the benefits of one are certain and eternal, the advantages of the others temporal and uncertain. Blessed are they who seek in the Scriptures the true riches; who traffic for the spiritual gains of celestial wisdom; for surely "the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and and the gain thereof than fine gold." Prov. iii. 14.

TWENTY-FIFTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

JOD.—PART X.

73. *Thy hands have made me, and fashioned me: give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments.*

THE formation of man was the last and noblest work of God, and it is a standing miracle of divine wisdom and power. The consideration, that God made us, is here urged as an argument why he should not forsake and reject us, since every artist hath a value for his own work, proportioned to its excellence. It is, at the same time, an acknowledgment of the service we owe him, founded on the relation which a creature beareth to his Creator. And the petition implieth in it a confession of our present inability to know his will without his revelation, and to do it without his grace.

74. *They that fear thee will be glad when they see me; because I have hoped in thy word.*

They who "fear God" are naturally "glad when they see" and converse with one like themselves; but more especially so, when it is one whose faith and patience have carried him through troubles, and rendered him victorious over temptations; one who hath "hoped in God's word," and hath not been disappointed. Every such instance affordeth fresh encouragement to all those who, in the course of their warfare, are to undergo like troubles, and to encounter like temptations. In all our trials, let us therefore remember, that our brethren, as well as ourselves, are deeply interested in the event, which may either strengthen or weaken the hands of multitudes.

75. *I know, O* LORD, *that thy judgments* are *right, and* that *thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.*

This humble, pious, and dutiful confession will be made by every true child of God, when under the correction of his heavenly Father. From whatever quarter afflictions come upon us, they are "the judgments of God," without whose providence nothing befalleth us. His judgments are always "right, or just," duly proportioned to the disease and strength of the patient; in sending them, God is "faithful" and true to his word, wherein he hath never promised the crown without the cross, but hath, on the contrary, assured us, that one will be necessary, in order to our obtaining the other; and that they who are beloved by him shall not sin with impunity, nor go astray without a call to return. All this we ought to "know," or to be assured of beyond doubt, as we may be from the many declarations in Scripture, from ovr own experience, and from that of others.

76. *Let, I pray thee, thy mercy and kindness be for my comfort, according to thy word unto thy servant.*

In the former verse the criminal, finding that the hand of God was upon him, had owned the justice and the faithfulness of his judge in the punishment inflicted. Judgment having thus had her perfect work, the offender, now humbled and penitent, maketh application to the throne of grace, and sueth for that mercy, which God, by his "word," hath promised to his servants, who are chastened, not for their destruction, but for their salvation. When God's "judgments" have brought us to an acknowledgment of our sins, his "merciful kindness" will speedily be our "comfort."

77. *Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live: for thy law is my delight.*

The mercies of God are "tender mercies," they are the mercies of a father to his children, nay, tender as the compassion of a mother over the son of her womb. They "come unto" us when we are not able to go to them. By them alone we "live" the life of faith, of love, of joy and gladness. And to such as "delight" in his law, God will grant these mercies, and this life; he will give them pardon, and by so doing, he will give them life from the dead.

78. *Let the proud be ashamed, for they dealt perversely with me without a cause;* but *I will meditate in thy precepts.*

This complaint of the Psalmist hath been made by the faithful in all ages, that the men of the world "dealt perversely with them without a cause," or oppressed them falsely, first spreading slanders and calumnies concerning them, and then persecuting them for those supposed crimes. Such usage should have no other effect upon us, than it had upon David. He prayed that

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"shame" and disappointment might teach humility to the "proud," and applied himself still more and more to meditate in the "precepts" of his God.

79. *Let those that fear thee turn unto me, and those that have known thy testimonies.*

David beseecheth God, if any good men had been alienated from him, either through fear, prejudice, or offence, that they might return to him, join, and acknowledge him. To thee, O thou Son of David, and King of the spiritual Israel, let those among thy people, who, through any temptation, have fallen from their allegiance, return and be subject.

80. *Let my heart be sound in thy statutes; that I be not ashamed.*

This is a prayer necessary for all men to use at all times, but more particularly in seasons of persecution and temptation. By "soundness of heart" is meant solidity and steadfastness in grace and virtue, as opposed to the mere form of godliness or fair show of the hypocrite, which conceal the rottenness and corruption lurking within; and also to the sudden and vanishing goodness of the temporary convert, which quickly disappears like the morning dew, and withers like the seed sown on a rock. When internal holiness accompanies and actuates that which is external, when the word is thoroughly rooted, and faith hath acquired the sovereignty over our desires, then our "hearts" are "sound in God's statutes," and there is hope that, in the day of trial, we shall not give our brethren cause to be ashamed of us, nor be ourselves "ashamed" before God.

CAPH.—PART XI.

81. *My soul fainteth for thy salvation:* but *I hope in thy word*, or, *I have expected thy word.*

Thus have the true servants of God, in every age, expressed their ardent desire of his salvation. Thus did the patriarchs, the prophets, the kings, and the faithful people, formerly wish to behold the advent of their Saviour in the flesh; until Simeon, taking him in his arms, spoke what they would all have spoken had they been present, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." But the Bridegroom was soon taken away, and the heavens have received him, until the restitution of all things; for which the church upon earth at this day waiteth and prayeth; that she may be delivered from all her troubles, and inseparably united to him in whom she delighteth. Every individual, when oppressed by sin and sorrow, may make his supplication in the same words, for that salvation which is by grace, through faith.

82. *Mine eyes fail for thy word, saying, When wilt thou comfort me?*

While the promised salvation is delayed, the afflicted soul thinketh every day a year, and looketh toward heaven for the accomplishment of God's word, saying to "her Friend and her Beloved, When wilt thou comfort me? Come, Lord Jesu, come quickly!"*

83. *For I am become like a bottle in the smoke:* yet *do I not forget thy statutes.*

"Bottles" among the Jews were made of skins. One of these, if exposed to heat and "smoke," would become shrivelled and useless. Such a change will labor and sorrow cause in the human frame; and the Psalmist here complaineth, that his beauty and his strength were gone; the natural moisture was dried up; in consequence of which, the skin shrivelled, and both color and vigor departed from him. Disease and old age will produce the same sad effects in us all; but the body's weakness is the soul's strength; as the outward man decayeth, the inward man is renewed: "I do not forget thy statutes."

84. *How many* are *the days of thy servant? When wilt thou execute judgment on them that persecute me?*

The well beloved John heard a question, of the same import with this, asked by the spirits of the martyrs, that had left their bodies, and were waiting, in the separate state, for the day of retribution. The answer, which was made to them, may likewise satisfy our impatience, when suffering affliction and persecution: "I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them, and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled." Rev. vi. 9, &c.

* "Defecerunt oculi mei:" Ambrosius: "Nonne quando aliquem desideramus et speramus adfore, eo dirigimus oculos unde speramus esse venturum? Sic teneræ uxor ætatis, de specula litorali indefessa expectatione conjugis præstolatur adventum: ut quamcunque navim viderit, illic putat conjugem navigare, metuatque ne videndi gratia dilecti, alius antevertat, nec ipsa possit prima dicere, video te, mi marite." Vide reliqua apud Ambrosium, ejusdem plane spiritus, nec tamen potui temperare, quin hæc exscriberem. Sic affectus est quisquis cum Paulo dissolvi cupit, et esse cum Christo. Sic denique qui semel gustato bono Dei verbo, ut idem Paulus ait, sibi postea relictus, deficit tædio sui, ac reddi sibi postulat prægustatam suavissimi amoris dulcedinem. BOSSUET.

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85. *The proud have digged pits for me, which* are *not after thy law.*

The manner of taking wild beasts was by "digging pits," and covering them over with turf, upon which when the beast trod, he fell into the pit, and was there confined and taken. But there was a "law," that if a pit were left open, and a tame beast, an ox, or an ass, fell into it, the owners of the pit should make good the damage: Exod. xxi. 33. Much more shall men be called to a severe account, who purposely lay snares and stumbling-blocks before the feet of their innocent brethren, to cause them to fall and perish.

86. *All thy commandments* are *faithful; they persecute me wrongfully; help thou me.*

Man is perfidious and deceitful, God is "faithful" and true; he hath promised to "help" those who suffer "wrongfully," and he will, in the end, show himself to be the avenger of all such. Let them wait with patience, since the King of Righteousness himself suffered as a malefactor, before he entered into his glory.

87. *They had almost consumed me upon earth; but I forsook not thy precepts.*

However low the church, or any member thereof, may, by persecution and tribulation, be brought upon earth, yet nothing can separate them from the love of God, while they "forsake not his precepts," nor disbelieve his promises. The soul, we know, must forsake the body; but God will forsake neither.

88. *Quicken me after thy loving kindness, so shall I keep the testimony of thy mouth.*

Through the "loving kindness" of God our Saviour, the Spirit of life is given unto us, by whose "quickening" influences we are revived, when sunk in sins, or in sorrows, and are enabled with joy and gladness, to persevere in "keeping the testimony of his mouth."

LAMED.—PART XII.

89. *For ever, O* LORD, *thy word is settled in heaven:* or, *Thou art for ever, O* LORD, *thy word is settled in heaven.* 90. *Thy faithfulness* is *unto all generations: thou hast established the earth, and it abideth.* 91. *They continue this day according to thine ordinances: for all* are *thy servants.*

The eternity of Jehovah, and the immutability of his counsels, are considerations which afford comfort and encouragement to his people, when their enemies are in arms against them. Even in this world the unwearied "heavens" continue to perform invariably their operations upon themselves and the bodies placed in them; while the globe of the "earth," retaining its original form and coherence of parts, still, as at the beginning, supports and maintains the successive "generations" of men, which live and move upon it, to whom the faithful promises of God are fulfilled, from age to age. Thus doth the unchangeable order of nature itself point out to us the truth of her great Author, and at the same time reprove the eccentric motions of rebellious man. The heavens and the earth "continue this day according to thine ordinance," O Lord, "for all things are thy servants;" all invariably serve thee, except man, who alone was endowed with reason, that he might obey and glorify thee in this life, and that which is to come!

92. *Unless thy law* had been *my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction.*

The Psalmist assureth us, from his own experience, how pleasant and how profitable, in time of trouble, is the meditation on the fidelity of God, as displayed in the stability of his works. The "delights," by this afforded, sustained his soul in "afflictions," which must otherwise have brought him to an end. And the same everlasting Word shall be the believer's support and consolation, even when the heavens shall melt around him with fervent heat, and the earth, and all that is therein, shall be burnt up. "Heaven and earth shall pass away," saith he who made them, "but my word shall not pass away."

93. *I will never forget thy precepts: for with them thou hast quickened me.*

Great are the necessities, and many the disorders of the soul; but in the Scripture there is provision and medicine for them all; and according to our various wants and maladies, God relieveth and "quickeneth" us, sometimes with one part of his word, sometimes with another. Now, when we have found ourselves thus benefited, at any time, by a particular passage of holy writ, we should "never forget," but remember and treasure it up in our minds, against a like occasion, when the same affliction or temptation may again befall us.

94. *I* am *thine; save me, for I have sought thy precepts.*

The double relation which we have the honor to bear to God by creation and by redemption, as the work of his hands, and the purchase of his blood, is a most endearing and prevailing argument with him, to "save" us from our enemies. But then let it be remembered, that no man can say to God with a good conscience, "I am thine," unless he can also go on, and say, "I have sought thy precepts," I desire to serve and obey thee alone; since, after all, "his servants we are to whom we obey;" and if sin be our master, how can we say to a master, whose interest is directly opposite, "I am thine?"

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95. *The wicked have waited for me to destroy me:* but *I will consider thy testimonies.*

In the preceding verse, David besought God to "save" him. The reason of that prayer is here assigned, namely, because "the wicked lay in wait for him to destroy him," as they afterwards did to destroy one, whom the afflicted and persecuted Psalmist represented. Spiritual enemies are continually upon the watch to destroy us all; and we can no way escape their wiles, but by "considering," so as to understand and observe God's "testimonies."

96. *I have seen an end of all perfection:* but *thy commandment is exceding broad.*

"Of "all perfection" in this world, whether of beauty, wit, learning, pleasure, honor, or riches, experience will soon show us the "end." But where is the end or boundary of the word of God? Who can ascend to the height of its excellency; who can fathom the depth of its mysteries; who can find out the comprehension of its precepts, or conceive the extent of its promises; who can take the dimensions of that love of God to man which it describeth, or that love of man to God which it teacheth! The knowledge of one thing leadeth us forward to that of another, and still, as we travel on, the prospect opens before us into eternity, like the pleasant and fruitful mountains of Canaan, rising on the other side of Jordan, when viewed by Moses from the top of Pisgah. O happy region of celestial wisdom, permanent felicity, true riches, and unfading glory; while we contemplate thee, how doth the world lessen, and shrink to nothing in our eyes! Thy blessings faith now beholdeth, but it is charity which shall hereafter possess and enjoy them.

MEM.—PART XIII.

97. *O how I love thy law! It is my meditation all the day.*

Words cannot express the love which a pious mind entertaineth for the Scriptures. They are the epistle of God to mankind, offering reconciliation, peace, and union with himself in glory; containing reasons why we should love him and each other, with directions how to show forth that love, which, as the apostle saith, is "the fulfilling of the law:" Rom. xiii. 10. On some portions of these Scriptures should our "meditation" be continually, and "each day" should add something to our knowledge, to our faith, to our virtue.

98. *Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they* are *ever with me.* 99. *I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies* are *my meditation.* 100. *I understand more than the ancients: because I keep thy precepts.*

The "commandments" of God were "ever with" David; the "testimonies" of God were his "meditation," and the "precepts" of God it was his care to "observe:" therefore his wisdom exceeded the policy of his "enemies," the learning of his "teachers," and the experience of the "ancients." Thus, by the wisdom of the Scriptures, did the holy Jesus, in the days of his flesh, confound his adversaries, astonish the teachers of the law, and instruct the aged. And it is the high prerogative of the Scriptures, at all times, to render youth and simplicity superior to the inveterate malice and subtilty of the grand deceiver and his associates.

101. *I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word.*

The foundation of all religion must be laid in mortification and self-denial; for since the will of fallen men is contrary to the will of God, we must abstain from doing the one, in order to do the other. The affections may be styled the "feet" of the soul, and unless these be "refrained from evil ways," no progress can be made in that way which alone is good and right; we cannot "keep God's word."

102. *I have not departed from thy judgments; for thou hast taught me.*

Perseverance is the effect of instruction from above, by the Spirit, through the word: and our heavenly Teacher differeth from all others in this, that, with the lesson, he bestoweth on the scholar both a disposition to learn, and an ability to perform.

103. *How sweet are thy words unto my taste!* yea, sweeter *than honey to my mouth.*

The soul hath its "taste," as well as the body, and that taste is then in good order, when the "words" of Scripture are "sweet" to the soul, as "honey" is to the mouth. If they are not always so, it is because our taste is vitiated by the world and the flesh; and we shall ever find our relish for the word of God to be greatest, when that for the world and the flesh is least, in time of affliction, sickness, and death; for these are contrary one to the other. In heaven the latter will be no more, and therefore the former will be all in all.

104. *Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.*

He who delighteth to study the Scriptures, will "understand," from them, the true nature of righteousness and of sin; he who doth understand the nature of each, will love the former; and, in proportion, "hate" the latter: and with that which we thoroughly hate, we will not bear to have

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any connection; with suspicion and jealousy we shall eye it approaching; with courage and constancy we shall arm and fight against it; we shall make no peace, nor so much as a truce with it; but, as faithful soldiers and servants of Jesus Christ, we shall aim at that utter extermination of it, which we have vowed, and which, through the Spirit of grace and power, will be accomplished, but not, perhaps, totally, till our life and warfare shall end together.

TWENTY-SIXTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

NUN.—PART XIV.

105. *Thy word* is *a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*

Man is a traveller, his life is a journey, heaven is his end, his road lies through a wilderness, and he is in the dark. Thus circumstanced, how earnestly and devoutly ought he to pray, "O send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead me, let them bring me to thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles!" Psal. xliii. 3. For surely, "the commandment is a lamp, and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life:" Prov. vi. 23. The word of God discovereth to us our errors: it showeth us where we lost our way, and how we may recover it again. If we take this "lamp" in our hand, it will not only point out our course in general, but also direct us in every step, and guide our "feet" aright in the "path" of holiness and peace. Thus, through the devious and lonely wilds of Arabia, was Israel once conducted to the land of promise, by the illuminating pillar, or rather by Him whose presence dwelt in the midst of it.

106. *I have sworn, and I will perform* it, *that I will keep thy righteous judgments.*

Such being the direction afforded by the word of God to a benighted pilgrim, David had obliged himself, in the most solemn manner, to follow that direction. Every Christian doth, at his baptism, in like manner, "promise and vow to keep God's commandments, and to walk in the same all the days of his life." The nature and extent of these engagements must be interpreted according to the covenant of grace, under which they are made. The command to us sinners is, that we should repent, and believe in him, who will pardon our failings, and strengthen our infirmities, that we may walk as becometh his disciples, who, though they ought not to commit sin, may yet, by divine grace, be restored and saved from it. "These things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins." 1 John, ii. 1.

107. *I am afflicted very much; quicken me, O* LORD, *according to thy word.*

The faithful servants of God may be "afflicted;" they may be "very much" and grievously afflicted: but let them consider, that, by afflictions, their corruptions are purged away, their faith is tried, their patience perfected, their brethren are edified, and their Master is glorified. Let them still firmly rely on the divine promise of grace and salvation; still humbly pray for its accomplishment in themselves: "quicken me, O LORD, according to thy word."

108. *Accept, I beseech thee, the free-will offerings of my mouth, O* LORD; *and teach me thy judgments.*

The "offerings" of the believer are prayer, praise, and holy resolutions and vows, like that of the Psalmist above, "to keep God's righteous judgments," in which he therefore petitioneth to be every day more and more "taught" and instructed by the Spirit of truth. Christians are called by St. Peter, "a royal and holy priesthood, appointed to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God, by Jesus Christ." 1 Pet. ii. 5. 9.

109. *My soul* is *continually in my hand: yet do I not forget thy law.*

To have one's "soul," נפש, or life, "in one's hand," is a phrase often used in Scripture, and implieth going in continual danger of one's life: see Judg. xii. 3. 1 Sam. xix. 5. and xxviii. 21. Job, xiii. 14. Great and incessant as David's perils were, he did not "forget" God's promises, nor his precepts, but trusted in the former, and performed the latter. St. Paul knew, that "in every city bonds and afflictions awaited him: but none of these things," saith he, "move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy." Acts, xx. 23.

110. *The wicked have laid a snare for me: yet I erred not from thy precepts.*

When open violence fails to move a man from his steadfastness, "the wicked will lay snares" for him, to entice him into sin, by the baits of honor, pleasure, or profit; by exposing him to unavoidable temptations, as, when David was driven out of his own land, to live amongst idolaters, of which usage he complaineth, 1 Sam. xxvi. 19; or else, by making laws which an honest man cannot obey without sin, or refuse to obey without danger. Numberless are the traps, of one kind or other, which human wit and diabolical malice, in conjunction, have set for the

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consciences of those who profess themselves to be the servants of God; and happy is that servant, whom they have not caused to "err from the precepts" of his Master.

111. *Thy testimonies have I taken as mine heritage for ever: for they* are *the rejoicing of my heart.*

The "testimonies" of God's will, his word and his sacraments, are the bonds and the deeds by which we hold our heavenly "inheritance, as heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." Of these deeds, and this inheritance, no power can deprive us; and when "they are the rejoicing of our hearts," we shall not, by preferring an earthly inheritance, deprive ourselves of them.

112. *I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes always,* even unto *the end.*

The "inclination of the heart" to good, is the work of God; but man is, nevertheless, in this, as in other instances, said to perform it, when he listens to the call, and obeys the motions, of his grace. We are not to judge of ourselves by what we sometimes say and do, but by the general disposition and tendency of the heart and its affections. When, after repeated trials, we find that the love of God casts the scale against the love of the world; when it is our glory, our delight, our treasure, our meat and drink, to do his will, and, against all opposition, to persevere in doing it, "even unto the end;" then are we the true disciples of that Master, whose heart was evermore inclined to good; who alone performed a perfect and spotless obedience, and persisted in working the work of him that sent him, until, with his last breath, he declared upon the cross, IT IS FINISHED.

SAMECH.—PART XV.

113. *I hate* vain *thoughts: but thy law do I love.*

"Love and hatred" are the two great and influencing affections of the human mind. Since the fall, they have been misplaced. By nature we "love vain thoughts," and "hate the law of God. The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be:" Rom. viii. 7. But in a renewed mind the case is altered; its delight is in the law of God, and therefore it cannot bear "vain thoughts," which are contrary to that law, and exalt themselves against it. Thoughts are often said to be free; from human censure they are, but not from the cognizance and judgment of the Omniscient. The mind should be well furnished with proper materials, on which to employ itself. We shall then be secured against the incursions of rambling, conceited, worldly, impure, and revengeful thoughts, which otherwise will devour half our time, and appear against us, to our unspeakable amazement, in that day when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed.

114. *Thou* art *my hiding place, and my shield: I hope in thy word.*

From vain thoughts, and vain persons, the Psalmist teacheth us to fly, by prayer to God, as our refuge and protector. This course a believer will as naturally take, in the hour of temptation and danger, as the offspring of the hen, on perceiving a bird of prey hovering over their heads, retire to their "hiding place," under the wings of their dam; or as the warrior opposeth his "shield" to the darts which are aimed at him.

115. *Depart from me, ye evil doers: for I will keep the commandments of my God.*

Safe under the protection of the Almighty, David bids the wicked "depart from him;" he neither fears their malice, nor will follow their counsels, being resolutely determined to adhere to his duty, and to "keep the commandments of his God." He who hath formed David's resolution, must, like him, disclaim and renounce the society of "evil doers;" for every man will insensibly contract the good or bad qualities of the company which he keeps; and should, therefore, be careful to keep such, as will make him wiser and better, and fit him for the goodly fellowship of saints and angels.

116. *Uphold me according to thy word, that I may live: and let me not be ashamed of my hope.* 117. *Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe: and I will have respect unto thy statutes continually.*

A resolution to fly from evil, and to do good, is properly followed by an earnest and repeated prayer, to be "upheld" in the performance of it, by divine grace, "according to God's word" and promise; that so our "hope" in that word may not fail, and put us to "shame" before our enemies; that we may be "saved" from falling, and enabled, in our walking, to have "respect unto the divine statutes continually." How necessary is this prayer to be made by creatures, whose tempers and dispositions are ever varying; who have so many and so formidable adversaries to contend with; and on whom their temporal condition hath so much influence!

118. *Thou hast trodden down all them that err from thy statutes: for their deceit is falsehood.*

The dreadful judgments which God, from time to time, in all ages of the world, hath executed, and which he still can and will execute, upon impenitent sinners, afford a kind of admonition, and a powerful motive, to obedience. As no force can counteract the

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power of God, so no "cunning" can deceive his wisdom, but will always, in the end, miserably "deceive" those who trust in it; and employ it against the counsels of heaven, "their deceit, or subtilty, is falsehood," שֶׁקֶר, it will fail and ruin its owners. Of this, history furnisheth instances in abundance. And it will be evident to all the world, when simplicity and innocence shall reign triumphant with the Lamb, on Mount Sion; and deceit and guile shall have their portion with the serpent, in the lake of fire.

119. *Thou puttest away all the ungodly of the earth* like *dross: therefore I love thy testimonies.*

"Ungodly" men and hypocrites are mingled among the sons and servants of God, as "dross" is blended with the pure metal, and appeareth to be part of it. But the fiery trial of divine judgment soon discovereth the difference. The false pretences of the hypocrite are detected, and the glory of the wicked vanisheth away. These dispensations of God's providence increase our "love" of his "word;" because they give us sensible experience of its truth, they show us the justice of God in punishing others, together with his mercy in sparing us, and removing those who might have corrupted us, and turned the silver itself into dross. In times of visitation, Christ sitteth among his people, "as a refiner and purifier of silver," purging away all dross, that out of what remains may be made "vessels of honor, meet for the Master's use," to serve and to adorn the sanctuary. See Mal. iii. 3. Isa. i. 25. 2 Tim. ii. 21.

120. *My flesh trembleth for fear of thee: and I am afraid of thy judgments.*

At the presence of Jehovah, when he appeareth in judgment, the earth trembleth and is still. His best servants are not exempted from an awful dread upon such occasions; scenes of this kind, shown in vision to the prophets, caused their flesh to quiver, and all their bones to shake. Encompassed with a frail body, and a sinful world, we stand in need of every possible tie; and the affections both of fear and love must be employed, to restrain us from transgression; we must, at the same time, "love God's testimonies, and fear his judgments."

AIN.—PART XVI.

121. *I have done judgment and justice: leave me not to mine oppressors.*

He who is engaged in a righteous cause, and hath acted uprightly in the support of it, may, so far, without incurring the censure of boasting, or trusting to his own righteousness, make David's plea, "I have done judgment and justice;" as if he had said, Thou, O my God, knowest that I am innocent of the crimes whereof my implacable enemies accuse me, and that I have none no wrong to those who seek to take away my life; deliver not thine injured servant, therefore, into their hands; "leave me not to mine oppressors." The Son of David might use the words in their full and absolute sense, and plead for a glorious resurrection, on the foot of his having performed a perfect obedience to the law.

122. *Be surety for thy servant for good: let not the proud oppress me.*

The Psalmist, finding himself ready to be seized by his insolent adversaries, like a helpless and insolvent debtor, entreateth the Almighty to appear in his defence, to take the matter into his own hands, to interpose and plead his cause, as his surety and advocate, in the day of trouble. Good Hezekiah uses the same word in the same sense, speaking of the time when death was about to make his claim upon the mortal part of him; "O Lord, I am oppressed, עָרְבָנִי, undertake, be surety for me:" Isa. xxxviii. 14. Happy the creatures, whose Creator is their surety, and hath interposed to rescue them from those great oppressors, sin, death, and Satan!

123. *Mine eyes fail for thy salvation, and for the word of thy righteousness.*

Salvation, whether temporal or spiritual, may be delayed; the "eyes" of the sufferer may "fail" with looking upward, and his earnest expectation may be ready to break forth, in the words of Sisera's mother, "Why is his chariot so long in coming? Why tarry the wheels of his chariot?" But what saith God, by his prophets and apostles? "Though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come:" Heb. ii. 3. "Yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come:" Heb. x. 37. The "word" which hath promised it, is the word of truth, faithfulness, and "righteousness;" the attributes of God are engaged for its accomplishment, and he cannot deny himself.

124. *Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy, and teach me thy statutes.* 125. *I* am *thy servant, give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies.*

The consideration, that we are the "servants" of God, if indeed we are so, will always be successfully urged to the best of masters, as an argument why he should "deal with us according to his mercy," in the pardoning of our offences; "teach us his statutes," that we may know and do his will; and instruct us in his "testimonies," that we may believe aright concerning him.

126. It is *time for* thee, LORD, *to work:* for *they have made void thy law.*

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The "law" of God "is made void" by those who deny its authority, or its obligation; by those who render it of none effect through their traditions, or their lives. When a deluge of wickedness and impiety entering at these gates, hath overwhelmed a land, "it is time for the Lord to work;" the great lawgiver will then exert his power, and vindicate his authority speedily. There is a certain measure of iniquity, which when communities, or individuals respectively, have filled up, the destroying angel comes forth, and executes his commission. How ought a man to fear, lest the next sin he commits should fill up his measure, and seal his eternal doom!

127. *Therefore I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold.*

As the wickedness of those increaseth who "made void the divine law," the zeal and "love" of believers should increase in proportion, to stem the torrent; and this may be done, to a surprising degree, by a few persons, who, after the example of the first Christians, can forsake all, to follow their Master; who have the sense and the courage to prefer truth, wisdom, holiness, and heaven, to falsehood, folly, sin, and the world; who can resolutely reject the glittering temptation, and say, without hypocrisy, to their God, "I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold."

128. *Therefore I esteem all* thy *precepts* concerning *all* things to be *right;* or, *Therefore all thy precepts, even all, have I approved;* and *I hate every false way.*

For the same reason that the children of God, in the worst of times, "love his commandments," they love them "all," not observing such only as they can observe without giving offence, but, regardless of the censures of the world, doing their duty in every particular; not "hating" some "evil ways," and at the same time walking in others, but extending and manifesting their aversion to all alike. Of such persons it is evident, that they make a conscience of their doings, and their conduct appears to be uniform; the adversary will have no evil thing to say of them; they will do real service to the cause which they maintain; and, after having honored their Master before men, they will by him be honored before men and angels.

PE.—PART XVII.

129. *Thy testimonies* are *wonderful: therefore doth my soul keep,* or, *observe, them.*

The Scriptures are "wonderful," with respect to the matter which they contain, the manner in which they are written, and the effects which they produce. They contain the sublimest spiritual truths, veiled under external ceremonies and sacraments, figurative descriptions, typical histories, parables, similitudes, &c. When properly opened and enforced, they terrify and humble, they convert and transform, they console and strengthen. Who but must delight to study and to "observe" these "testimonies" of the will and the wisdom, the love and the power, of God most high! While we have these holy writings, let us not waste our time, misemploy our thoughts, and prostitute our admiration, by doating on human follies, and wondering at human trifles.

130. *The entrance of thy words giveth light: it giveth understanding to the simple.*

The Scriptures are the appointed means of "enlightening" the mind with true and saving knowledge. They show us what we were, what we are, and what we shall be; they show us what God hath done for us, and what he expecteth us to do for him; they show us the adversaries we have to encounter, and how to encounter them with success; they show us the mercy and the justice of the Lord, the joys of heaven, and the pains of hell. Thus will they "give to the simple," in a few days, an "understanding" of those matters, which philosophy, for whole centuries, sought in vain.

131. *I opened my mouth and panted: for I longed for thy commandments.*

An eastern traveller, fatigued through toil, and parched by heat, doth not, with more vehement desire, gasp for the cooling breeze, than the servant of God, in time of temptation and trouble, "panteth" after that spirit of refreshment and consolation, which breathes in the Scriptures of truth. The affections are the springs of human actions; no arguments are needful to impel, and no difficulties are sufficient to retard, the man who is in pursuit of an object which, with all his heart, he loves and "longs for." How happy is it when heaven, instead of earth, is that object!

132. *Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name.*

A child of God is never so much afflicted, as when his heavenly Father seemeth, for a time, to have turned away his face from him. All lesser troubles vanish, when God doth but vouchsafe a "look" of paternal compassion. And since the love of Jehovah to his people is unchangeable as his nature, mercies formerly shown to others, are most forcibly urged by the Psalmist in his petition for the like; "Be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love hy name."

133. *Order my steps in thy word; and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.*

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By the instruction of his "word," God bringeth us into the way of life; by the aids of his grace he "directeth" and "supporteth" our "steps" in that way, enabling us, as we proceed, to overcome the sins which do beset us, so that they prevail not to turn us back, or to make us desist from travelling toward the city of our eternal habitation.

134. *Deliver me from the oppression of man: so will I keep thy precepts.*

He truly loveth God, who requesteth "deliverance" from "oppression" and persecution, that he may again enjoy the opportunities of "keeping his precepts," and of serving him without distraction. And gratitude for his deliverance will be, with such an one, an additional reason for using those opportunities, when they are restored, to the best advantage.

135. *Make thy face to shine upon thy servant: and teach me thy statutes.*

The same sentiment is again expressed in different language. The Psalmist prayeth for a return of the divine favor, and for better days, that in peace and tranquillity he may learn and do the will of God. Tribulation is a dark and tempestuous night; but Jehovah causeth "his face to shine" upon his people, and the effects are like those produced by the sun at his rising, when universal nature revives and rejoices, and clouds and darkness fly away.

136. *Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law.*

David, who, through this whole Psalm, so often and so ardently beseecheth God to "teach him his statutes," declareth in this verse, his continual grief of heart, occasioned by seeing others break those statutes. Thus Lot, among the Sodomites, was "vexed from day to day," not so much at their usage of himself, as at "seeing and hearing their unlawful deeds:" 2 Pet. ii. 8. Thus Jeremiah telleth the ungodly of his time, "If ye will not hear, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride; and mine eyes shall weep sore, and run down with tears:" Jer. xiii. 17. Thus the holy Jesus "looked round about on the Pharisees, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts:" Mark, iii. 5. and "wept over" a city which had always persecuted, and was then about to crucify him, because it "knew not the things which belonged to its peace:" Luke, xix. 41. Accept, O Lord, the tears which our blessed Redeemer shed, in the days of his flesh, for us, who should, but, alas! too often cannot, weep for our brethren, or for ourselves; and give us, at least, the grace of holy mourning, which in thy sight is of great price.

TZADDI.—PART XVIII.

137. *Righteous* art *thou, O* LORD, *and upright* are *thy judgments.*

This portion of our Psalm is employed in celebrating the righteousness of God, manifested to us by his word, and by his dispensations, which that word both recordeth and explaineth. It is said of the emperor Mauritius, that, upon seeing all his children slain before his face, at the command of that bloody tyrant and usurper, Phocas, himself expecting the next stroke, with a philosophy truly divine, he exclaimed aloud, in these words of David, "Righteous art thou, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments."* By faith he was assured of this great truth, and nobly confessed it, notwithstanding all appearances to the contrary. The last day will demonstrate the same thing to the whole world, and open the mouths of men and angels to declare, concerning all the divine proceedings, what the good Mauritius acknowledged, at the time, with regard to the murder of his children.

138. *Thy testimonies,* that *thou hast commanded,* are *righteous and very faithful.*

The revelations of God's will are "righteousness" and "truth;" his commands are just, and ought to be obeyed; his promises and his threatenings will infallibly come to pass, and deserve, above all things, to be regarded.

139. *My zeal hath consumed me; because mine enemies have forgotten thy words.*

"Zeal" is a high degree of love; and when the object of that love is ill-treated, it venteth itself in a mixture of grief and indignation, which are sufficient to wear and "consume" the heart. This will be the case, where men rightly conceive of that dishonor which is continually done to God by creatures whom he hath made and redeemed But never could the verse be uttered, with such fulness of truth and propriety, by any one, as by the Son of God, who had such a sense of his Father's glory, and of man's sin, as no person else ever had. And, accordingly, when his zeal had exerted itself in purging the temple, St. John tells us, "his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." The place where it is so written, is Psal. lxix. 9. and the passage is exactly parallel to this before us.

140. *Thy word* is *very pure; therefore thy servant loveth it.*

"Thy word is very pure;" in the original, "tried, refined, purified, like gold in the furnace:" absolutely perfect, without the dross of vanity and fallibility, which runs

*Baron. Annal, ad Ann. 602.

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through human writings. The more we try the promises, the surer we shall find them.* This pure word hath likewise in it a power of ourifying us. It containeth precepts and examples of purity, helps and encouragements to purity, and the Spirit of purity goeth with it, and worketh by it. "Therefore thy servant loveth it;" and no one, but a true servant of God, can "therefore" love it because it is pure; since he who loves it must desire to be like it, to feel its efficacy, to be reformed by it, and conformed to it.

141. *I* am *small and despised:* yet *do not I forget thy precepts.*

Faithfulness to God will often reduce men to straits, and bring upon them the contempt of the world; happy are they who, under these difficulties and discouragements, "forget not his precepts," but still continue faithful, looking unto Jesus, who once "endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of God." Heb. xii. 2.

142. *Thy righteousness* is *an everlasting righteousness, and thy law* is *the truth.*

Men may decree wickedness by a law, or they may change their decrees, and, with them, what was right to-day, may be wrong tomorrow. But the law of God is "righteousness," and it is "truth," to-day and for ever. His justice, goodness, and fidelity, are unchangeable; he will never forsake us, unless we forsake him, but will remember us in our lowest estate, if, in that estate, we "do not forget his precepts."

143. *Trouble and anguish have taken hold upon,* or, *have found, me,* yet *thy commandments* are *my delights.*

We need not take pains, as many do, "to find trouble and anguish," for they will, one day, "find us." In that day, the revelations of God must be to us instead of all worldly "delights" and pleasures, which will then have forsaken us; and how forlorn and desolate will be our state, if we shall have no other delights, no other pleasures, to succeed them, and to accompany us into eternity! Let our study be now in the Scriptures, if we expect our comfort from them in time to come.

144. *The righteousness of thy testimonies* is *everlasting: give me understanding, and I shall live.*

In every sense, O Lord Jesu, thy righteousness is "everlasting;" Grant us the "understanding" of it, in every sense, and we "shall live," in thee now, and with thee for ever.

* Pure gold is so fixed, that Boerhave informs us of an ounce of it set in the eye of a glass furnace for two months, without losing a single grain.

TWENTY-SIXTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

KOPH.—PART XIX.

145. *I cried with* my *whole heart; hear me, O* LORD: *I will keep thy statutes.* 146. *I cried unto thee; save me, and I shall keep thy testimonies.*

Believers, in time of affliction, make their prayer to God with fervor and importunity, petitioning for deliverance, that they may the better serve their Deliverer, and keep his laws.

147. *I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried: I hoped in thy word.* 148. *Mine eyes prevent the* night *watches, that I might meditate in thy word.*

It is a certain sign that our hearts are set upon a work, when the thoughts of it cause sleep to depart from us, and we awake readily, constantly, and early, to the performance of it. David delighted in the holy exercises of prayer and meditation; therefore he "prevented the dawning of the morning," and was beforehand with the light itself: therefore his "eyes prevented the watches," that is, the last of those watches, into which the night was by the Jews divided; he needed not the watchman's call, but was stirring before it could be given. Climate and constitution will, doubtless, make a difference, and claim considerable allowance; but by Christians, who enjoy their health, in temperate weather, the sun should not be suffered to shine in vain, nor the golden hours of the morning to glide away unimproved; since of David's Lord, as well as of David, it is said, "in the morning rising up, a great while before day, he went out and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." Mark, i. 35.

149. *Hear my voice, according unto thy loving kindness: O* LORD, *quicken me according to thy judgment;* that is, *thy word.* 150. *They draw nigh that follow after mischief: they are far from thy law.* 151. *Thou* art *near, O* LORD; *and all thy commandments* are *truth.*

If our enemies "draw nigh" to destroy us, God is still "nearer" to preserve us; and, however his "word" may be rejected by the wicked, the faithful always find it to be "true," to their great and endless comfort.

152. *Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old, that thou hast founded them for ever.*

This portion of our Psalm endeth with the triumph of faith over all dangers and temptations. "Concerning thy testimonies," the revelations of thy will, thy counsels for the salvation of thy servants, "I have known of old," by faith, and by my own experience,

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as well as that of others, "that thou hast founded them for ever;" they are unalterable and everlasting as the attributes of their great author, and can never fail those who rely upon them, in time, or in eternity.

RESH—PART XX.

153. *Consider mine affliction, and deliver me: for I do not forget thy law.*

IT is happy when our "afflictions" do not make us to "forget the law of God;" then have we confidence toward him in our prayers, that he will "consider" and regard our sufferings, as he did those of Israel in Egypt, and come down to "deliver" us out of all our troubles; for Israel is still in Egypt, while the church is in the world: but let us remember the promise, and rejoice in hope.

154. *Plead my cause, and deliver me: quicken me according to thy word.*

God is the Patron of his people, to "plead" their "cause;" their Redeemer, to "deliver" them out of troubles; the Author and Fountain of their life, to "quicken" and support them. We may, therefore, have recourse to him at all times, as an Advocate, a Saviour, and a Comforter, for the defence of our cause, the deliverance of our persons, and the support of our hearts. And all this, "according to his word," in which he hath engaged thus to patronize, to rescue, and to strengthen those who trust in him, and apply to him.

155. *Salvation* is *far from the wicked: for they seek not thy statutes.*

The "salvation" which is nigh to the faithful, because they diligently and earnestly seek to know and to do the will of God revealed to them in his word, is "far from the wicked," because "they seek not his statutes," nor concern themselves to know what they are, much less to observe and practise them

156. *Great* are *thy tender mercies, O* LORD: *quicken me according to thy judgments*, that is, *thy word.* 157. *Many are my persecutors, and mine enemies:* yet *do I not decline from thy testimonies.* 158. *I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved; because they kept not thy word.*

Persecution tempteth men to apostasy, and is the great trial of our fidelity to God and to his word. He who, in such circumstances, forgeteth his own sufferings, to commiserate the sin and folly of his persecutors, is a true follower, as David was a forerunner, of Jesus Christ.

159. *Consider how I love thy precepts: quicken me, O* LORD, *according to thy loving kindness.* 160. *Thy word* is *true* from *the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments* endureth *for ever.*

It is observable how the Psalmist delighteth to dwell on these two sweet notes; the "loving kindness" of God in promising salvation, and his "truth" in the constant performance of that promise to his church, while she "loves" and adheres to his "precepts." Thus it hath been "from the beginning," and thus it will be, until the whole counsel of heaven shall at length be fulfilled, by the resurrection and salvation of the just.

SCHIN—PART XXI.

161. *Princes have persecuted me without a cause: but my heart standeth in awe of thy word.* 162. *I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil.*

David was "persecuted" by Saul and his associates, "without a cause." The life of Saul was spared by him, because "he stood in awe of God's word," and preferred the comfortable reflection of having obeyed its injunctions, to all the "spoil," and to those many advantages, that would have accrued to him, by the overthrow and death of his implacable adversary, who acknowledged, upon the occasion, "Thou art more righteous than I:" 1 Sam, xxiv. 17. The sufferings of the body are soon over; the joys of conscience have no end.

163. *I hate and abhor lying:* but *thy law do I love.*

The word of truth is the proper object of our "love," and every thing which is contrary to it deserveth our "hatred and abhorrence;" nor is life itself worth preserving, at the expense either of our faith or our virtue.

164. *Seven times a day do I praise thee, because of thy righteous judgments.*

They who, like David, during the time of persecution and affliction, put their trust in God, and wait his decision of their cause, will always find reason, as David did, to "praise him seven times a day," or continually, for his just decrees and "righteous judgments" concerning them.

165. *Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.*

Amidst the storms and tempests of the world, there is a perfect calm in the breasts of those who not only do the will of God, but "love" to do it. They are at peace with God, by the blood of reconciliation; at peace with themselves, by the answer of a good conscience, and the subjection of those desires which war against the soul; at peace with all men by the spirit of charity; and the whole creation is so at peace with them, that all things work together for their good. No external troubles can rob them of this "great peace," no "offences" or stumbling-blocks which are thrown in their way by persecu-

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tion or temptation, by the malice of enemies or the apostasy of friends, by any thing which they see, hear of, or feel, can detain or divert them from their course. Heavenly love surmounts every obstacle, and runs with delight the way of God's commandments.

166. LORD, *I have hoped for thy salvation, and done thy commandments.*

This is the true posture of a Christian, in which he need not fear to be found by his last and great enemy, death, "doing" his duty, and "hoping" for salvation from the person who is his Master, as well as his Redeemer, and who, consequently, expecteth to be obeyed, no less than to be believed in.

167. *My soul hath kept thy testimonies, and I love them exceedingly.* 168. *I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies: for all my ways* are *before thee.*

The "love of God's testimonies," and the consideration, that all "our ways are before him," and subject to his immediate inspection, are two powerful motives to obedience. The plea of having "kept the divine precepts," &c. in the mouth of David, or any other believer, intendeth sincerity, not perfection, and is alleged as an evidence of grace, not as a claim of merit. Christ alone kept the old law, and he enableth us to observe the new.

TAU.—PART XXII.

169. *Let my cry come near before thee, O* LORD: *give me understanding according to thy word.* 170. *Let my supplication come before thee: deliver me according to thy word.*

The Psalmist still continueth instant in prayer for "understanding," to direct him in the midst of dangers and temptations, and for "deliverance" out of them all, when God shall see fit to accomplish the promises made in his "word." These are blessings, for which a man cannot be too frequent, or too earnest, in his petitions to the throne of heaven.

171. *My lips shall utter praise, when thou hast taught me thy statutes.* 172. *My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments* are *righteousness.*

He who obtaineth his requests, and is made a partaker of that grace and salvation, for which he so fervently prayed, will edify men, by singing the "praises," and proclaiming the "righteousness" of God his Saviour.

173. *Let thine hand help me: for I have chosen thy precepts.* 174. *I have longed for thy salvation, O* LORD: *and thy law is my delight.*

"Salvation" by the "Hand," or Arm of Jehovah (which is often in Scripture a title of Messiah,) hath been the object of the hopes, the desires, and "longing" expectation of the faithful, from Adam to this hour; and will continue so to be, until He, who hath already visited us in great humility, shall come again in glorious majesty, to complete our redemption, and take us to himself.

175. *Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee; and let thy judgments help me.*

The "life" which God granteth and preserveth to us, whether it be the natural life of the body, or the spiritual life of the soul (for both are from him,) should be employed in "praising" him. This return for his mercies we are always ready to promise, when we are in danger, but often forgetful to perform, when delivered out of it.

176. *I have gone astray like a lost sheep: seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments.*

It is doubtful, whether David here speaks of his misery, or his sin; of his "wandering," as an exile in foreign lands, or of his "going astray" from the "commandments" of his God, though he had not altogether "forgotten," but was desirous of returning again to the observance of them, and therefore beseeches the great Shepherd to "seek" and bring back his "lost sheep."* In the application of the passage to ourselves, it matters not which interpretation we adopt, since we are both sinners and exiles; exiles, because sinners; "we have erred and strayed from God's ways, like lost sheep," and are, for that reason, excluded from our heavenly city and country, to wander for a time in the wilderness. Restore us, O Lord Jesu, by thy grace to righteousness, and by thy power to glory!

* "Erravi sicut ovis—Omnes nos quasi oves erravimus." Isa. liii. 6. Sed nos bonus ille Pastor humeris reportavit. Luc. xv. 5. BOSSUET. Mr. Merrick's Poetical Paraphrase of this verse is so beautiful and affecting, that I cannot refrain from subjoining it—

Thine eyes in me the sheep behold,
Whose feet have wander'd from the fold;
That, guideless, helpless, strives in vain
To find its safe retreat again:
Now listens, if perchance its ear
The Shepherd's well-known voice may hear;
Now, as the tempests round it blow
In plaintive accents vents its woe.
Great Ruler of this earthly ball,
Do thou my erring steps recall:
O seek thou him who thee hast sought,
Nor turns from thy decrees his thought

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TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM CXX.

ARGUMENT.

THIS, and the fourteen Psalms which follow it, are entitled, "Psalms of Degrees, or of Ascensions." For what reason they were so called, is altogether uncertain. Certain, however, it is, that they are most instructivive and pleasing compositions, wonderfully calculated to elevate the soul to God; and that the Christian, as he proceeds from one degree of virtue to another, in his way towards eternal felicity, cannot employ himself better than in meditation on them. In the first of these Psalms, the Author, most probably David, complaineth of the falsehood, the treachery, and the violence of men, amongst whom he grieveth that his pilgrimage is prolonged.

1. *In my distress, I cried unto the* LORD, *and he heard me.* 2. *Deliver my soul, O* LORD, *from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue.*

The prophet relateth the success of his prayer made to Jehovah in time of trouble. He "cried," and was "heard." The particular species of trouble, under which he then labored, was that caused by the malice and treachery of his adversaries, who either with "lying lips" bore false witness against him, or with a "deceitful tongue" tried to ensnare him, and to draw something from him, on which they might ground an accusation. Thus the Jews dealt with Christ; and men of their cast and complexion have, in all ages, dealt thus with his true followers. From such "lips," and such "tongues," God only can "deliver" the persons and the reputations of the most innocent.

3. *What shall be given unto thee? or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue?* 4. *Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper.*

Some render the first of these two verses a little differently: "What shall a false tongue give thee, or what shall it add to thee?" The sense will be much the same, whether the Psalmist be supposed to address his question to the false tongue, or to him who is the owner of it. The purport of the question plainly is this: What profit or advantage do you expect to reap from this practice of lying and slandering? what will at last be its end and its reward? Then followeth the answer: "Sharp arrows of the mighty one," גבור, who is the avenger of truth and innocence; with a fire that burns fiercely, and burns long, like that which was made of "juniper," or some wood used in those days, remarkable for increasing and retaining heat; punishments justly inflicted on a tongue, the words of which have been keen and killing as arrows, and which, by its lies and calumnies, hath contributed to set the world on fire. We read in the Gospel, of one who exclaimed, "Send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my TONGUE, for I am tormented in this FLAME."

5. *Woe is me that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!*

The Psalmist lamenteth his long continuance among those deceitful and malicious men, whom he compareth to the wild, barbarous, and idolatrous Arabs, the descendants of "Kedar," the son of Ishmael: Gen. xxv. 13. The former part of the verse is, with greater propriety perhaps, rendered, by many of the translators and expositors, thus: "Woe is me that my sojourning is prolonged—" כי גרתי משך, "I dwell, or, my dwelling is, among the tents of Kedar." When our Lord was upon earth, the Jews were become the spiritual Ishmaelites, sons of the bond-woman, persecutors of the sons of the free woman, and the children of promise. "O faithless and perverse generation," saith he, "how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?" Matt. xvii. 17. "And as then he that was born after the flesh, persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now:" Gal. iv. 29. The church daily sigheth and groaneth, because her "sojourning is prolonged," and she dwelleth among adversaries of various denominations, among those who take delight in vexing and troubling her. These are "the tents of Kedar," among which we dwell in the wilderness, longing to depart, and to be with Christ in the city of the living God.

6. *My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace.* 7. *I* am *for peace;* or, *I am a man of peace: but when I speak, they* are *for war.*

If this was the case of David, much more might the Son of David make the same complaint, that he "dwelt with them that hated peace;" that although he was "a man of peace," meek, lowly, and gracious in his deportment to all around him; although he came to make peace, and to reconcile all things in heaven and earth; although his conversation and his preaching were of peace, and love, and the kingdom of God; yet no sooner did he open his mouth to "speak" upon these divine subjects, but his enemies were up in arms, ready to apprehend, to ac-

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cuse, to condemn, and to crucify him. Marvel not, O disciple of Jesus! if the world hate and oppose thee; but pray only, that when thou shalt be used as he was, thou mayest be enabled to bear that usage as he did.

PSALM CXXI.

ARGUMENT.

IN this Psalm, the prophet, 1, 2, introduceth a person, most probably an Israelite on his way to Jerusalem, expressing his trust and confidence in Jehovah, the Maker of heaven and earth, of whose favor and protection, at all times, and in all dangers, the prophet, 3—8, assureth him. These promises, like those in xcist Psalm, were, in their full and spiritual sense, made good to Messiah, and are now daily accomplishing in the members of his mystical body, the Christian church. Bishop Lowth supposeth the two first verses to be spoken by David, when going out to war, and the answer of encouragement to be made by the high priest from the Holy Place. In this case, the idea of warfare is added to that of pilgrimage, and the Psalm rendered still more applicable to us, as well as to the true David our King.

1. *I will lift up mine eyes to the hills, from whence cometh my help.* 2. *My help* cometh *from the* LORD, *which made heaven and earth.*

The true Israelite, amidst the dangers of his earthly pilgrimage and warfare, looketh continually towards the heavenly city, whither he is travelling. Faith showeth him afar off the everlasting "hills, from whence cometh the help," which must bring him in safety to them. He "lifteth up his eyes," in prayer to the Almighty, whose temple and habitation are thereon. He putteth not his trust in any creature, but imploreth aid immediately of "him who made heaven and earth," and who, consequently, hath power over all things in both.

3. *He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber.* 4. *Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.*

In the first two verses, we heard the believer declaring his resolution to trust in God. The prophet now commendeth that resolution, and encourageth him to persevere in it. As if he had said, Thou dost well to expect help from Jehovah alone; to overlook the vanities here below; to place thy confidence, and set thy affections, on him who dwelleth above. Know therefore assuredly, that he will be with thee in the way in which thou goest; he will preserve thee from falling, and defend thee from all dangers; for in him thou hast a guardian, who is not, like all others, liable to remit his care, by being subject to sleep or death. The eye of his providence is upon thee, and that is always open. "Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep."

5. *The* LORD *is thy keeper: the* LORD *is thy shade upon thy right hand.* 6. *The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.*

The meaning is, that the good man, during his journey through life, shall be under God's protection at all seasons; as Israel in the wilderness was defended from the burning heat of the sun, by the moist and refreshing shadow of the cloud; and secured against the inclement influences of the nocturnal heavens, by the kindly warmth and splendor diffused from the pillar of fire. Be thou with us, thy servants, O Lord, in the world, as thou wast with Israel in the wilderness; suffer not our virtue to dissolve before the sultry gleams of prosperity; permit it not to be frozen by the chilling blasts of adversity.

7. *The* LORD *shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul.* 8. *The* LORD *shall preserve thy going out, and thy coming in, from this time forth for evermore.*

To dissipate our fears, and remove every ground of diffidence, Jehovah promiseth, by his holy prophet, to "preserve us from all evil," which might befall us in the way, either by turning it aside, or turning it finally to our advantage, so that we shall not perish, but see our labors happily begun and ended in him; he "shall preserve our going out, and our coming in," until, through all the vicissitudes of this mortal state, he shall have brought us into his holy "temple," there to become "pillars," and to "go no more out." Rev. iii. 12.

PSALM CXXII.

ARGUMENT.

THE author of this Psalm, as we are informed by its title, was David. The subject of it is that joy which the people were wont to express, upon their going up in companies to keep a feast at Jerusalem, when the divine services were regulated, and that city was appointed to be the place of public worship. Every thing which can be said upon this topic, must naturally hold good in its application to the Christian church, and the celebration of her feasts; at which seasons the believer will as naturally extend his thoughts to the Jerusalem above, and to that festival which shall one day be there kept by all the people of God.

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1. *I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the* LORD.

Great was the joy of an Israelite, when his brethren called upon him to accompany them, on some festive occasion, to the tabernacle, or temple at Jerusalem; great is the joy of a Christian, when he is invited, in like manner, to celebrate the feasts of the church, to commemorate the nativity, or the resurrection, and to eat and drink at the table of his Lord. Such, in kind, but far greater in degree, is that gladness, which the pious soul experiences, when she is called hence; when descending angels say unto her, Thy labor and sorrow are at an end, and the hour of thy enlargement is come; put off mortality and misery at once; quit thy house of bondage, and the land of thy captivity; fly forth, and "let us go together into the house of the LORD, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

2 *Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem!*

Yes, O thou holy and happy city of peace, and love, and everlasting delight, our God will in time bring us to behold, and to enter thee; "our feet," which now, with many a weary step, tread the earth, "shall" one day "stand within thy gates," which are opened to all believers; we shall at length rest in thy celestial mansions, and converse for ever with thy blest inhabitants!

3. *Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together.*

We see thee not, indeed, as yet, but we hear of thy stability, thy unity, thy beauty, and thy magnificence. Thy foundations are firm upon the holy hills; they are garnished with all manner of precious stones; and in them are the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. Thy gates are of pearl, twelve in number, and open to all quarters, for the tribes of the spiritual Israel to come in. Thy streets are of pure gold, as it were transparent glass; thou art crowned with the unfading brightness of eternal glory; and the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb, are the temple in the midst of thee. All these glorious things are spoken of thee, thou city of God! And yet, when we come to see thee with our eyes, we shall be forced to confess, as the Queen of Sheba did upon viewing the earthly Jerusalem, with its material temple, and the court of its mortal king, that thou far "exceedest the fame which we had heard," and that "the half was not told us." 1 Kings, x. 7.

4. *Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the* LORD, *unto*, or, *according to, the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the* LORD.

As all the "tribes" of Israel, three times in the year, were seen "going up" to the old Jerusalem, in compliance with the "testimonies," the injunctions and institutions of their law, to acknowledge the mercies, and to give thanks unto the name of "Jehovah," who had done such great things for them; so from the ends of the earth are the redeemed of the Lord, out of every nation, and kindred, and people, continually ascending, by faith and charity, to the new Jerusalem. St. John saw the nations of them that were saved, walking in the light of the heavenly city, and he heard her streets resound with the hallelujahs of ten thousand times ten thousand.

5. *For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David.*

The Israelites resorted to Jerusalem, because it was the metropolis of the country and there was the residence of their monarchs, after the kingdom was established in "the house of David." But, alas! that metropolis is desolate, and "the thrones of judgment," which were therein, have been long since cast down to the ground. A Jerusalem, however, remains, which shall never be moved; in that Jerusalem is the throne of eternal judgment erected, and the Son of David sitteth upon it. Of him it was said by the angel to Mary, "The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end:" Luke, i. 32. And he himself thus addressed his apostles: "Verily, I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Matt. xix. 28.

6. *Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.*

In this latter part of our Psalm, the members of the Israelitish church are exhorted to pray for its peace and welfare. What that church was, the Christian church militant upon earth now is, and demandeth, in like manner, the prayers of all Christian people for its peace and welfare in a troublesome and contentious world. Its increase here below, is in reality the increase of Jerusalem above, of which it is a part, and ought to be a resemblance. Heaven has therefore decreed, that they who contribute their labors, as well as their prayers, to promote so good and so glorious an end, shall enjoy its protection, and its blessing shall be upon the work of their hands; "They shall prosper that love thee."

7. *Peace be within thy walls*, and *prosperity*, or, *plenteousness, within thy palaces.*

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Come, O thou divine Spirit of peace and love, who didst reside in the soul of the holy Jesus, descend into his mystical body, and fill us, who compose it, with all his heavenly tempers; put an end to heresies, heal all schisms, cause bitter contentions to cease, abolish every enmity, and make us to be of one mind in thy holy city; that so, "peace being within our walls," her citizens may give themselves to every profitable employment, and "plenteousness" of grace, wisdom, and truth, as well as of earthly blessings, may be in all her "palaces." Thus will she become a lively portrait of that place which is prepared for them that love one another, where, with one heart and one voice, they shall ascribe "salvation and glory to God and to the Lamb."

8. *For my brethren and companion's sake, I will now say, Peace* be *within thee.* 9. *Because of the house of the* LORD *our God I will seek thy good.*

In these concluding verses, the Psalmist declareth the two motives, which induced him to utter his best wishes, and to use his best endeavors, for the prosperity of Jerusalem; namely, love of his brethren, whose happiness was involved in that of their city; and love of God, who had there fixed the residence of his glory. These motives are ever in force, and ought, surely, to operate with marvellous energy upon our hearts, to stir us up to imitate the pattern now before us, in fervent zeal and unwearied labor, for the salvation of men, and the glory of their great Redeemer; both which will then be complete, when the church militant shall become triumphant, and the heavenly paradise shall be filled with plants taken from its terrestrial nursery.

Theodore Zuinger, of whom some account may be found in Thuanus, when he lay on his death-bed, took his leave of the world, in a paraphrase on the foregoing Psalm; giving it the same turn with that given to it above. I have never been able to get a sight of the original;* but one may venture, I believe, to say, that it has lost nothing in a translation of it by the late learned and pious Mr. Merrick; which is so excellent, that I must beg leave to present it to the reader. Some of the lines are retained in his more literal poetical version, published in 1765. It may serve as a finished specimen of the noble and exalted use which a Christian may and ought to make of the Psalms of David.

PSALM CXXII.

I.

What joy, while thus I view the day
That warns my thirsting soul away,
  What transports fill my breast!
For, lo, my great Redeemer's pow'r
Unfolds the everlasting door,
  And leads me to his rest.

II.

The festal morn, my God, is come,
That calls me to the hallow'd dome,
  Thy presence to adore;
My feet the summons shall attend,
With willing steps thy courts ascend,
  And tread th' ethereal floor.

III.

E'en now to my expecting eyes
The heav'n-built towers of Salem rise;
  E'en now, with glad survey,
I view her mansions, that contain
Th' angelic forms, an awful train,
  And shine with cloudless day.

IV.

Hither from earth's remotest end,
Lo, the redeem'd of God ascend,
  Their tribute hither bring:
Here, crown'd with everlasting joy,
In hymns of praise their tongues employ,
  And hail th' immortal King:

V.

Great Salem's King; who bids each state
On her decrees dependent wait;
  In her, ere time begun,

* Since the publication of the first edition, a learned friend has obliged me with a copy of these Latin verses of Zuinger, transcribed from the 303d page of Vitæ Germanorum Medicorum, by Melchior Adamus. They are as follow:

O lux candida, lux mihi
Læti conscia transitus!
Per Christi meritum patet
  Vitæ porta beatæ.
Me status revocat dies
Augustam Domini ad domum:
Jam sacra ætherii premam
  Lætus limina templi.
Jam visam Solymæ edita
Cœlo culmina, et ædium
Cœtus angelicos, suo et
Augustam populo urbem:
Urbem, quam procul infimis
Terræ finibus exciti
Petunt Christiadæ, et Deum
  Laudent voce perenni:
Jussam cœlitus oppidis
Urbem jus dare cæteris,
Et sedem fore Davidis
  Cuncta in sæcla beati.
Mater nobilis urbium!
Semper te bona pax amat:
Et te semper amantibus
  Cedunt omnia recte.
Semper pax tua mœnia
Colit; semper in atriis
Tuis copia dexterâ
  Largâ munera fundit.
Dulcis Christiadûm domus,
Civem adscribe novitium:
  Sola comitata Caritas—
  Spesque Fidesque valete.

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High on eternal base uprear'd,
His hands the regal seat prepar'd
For Jesse's favor'd son.

VI.

Mother of cities! O'er thy head
See Peace, with healing wings outspread,
Delighted fix her stay.
How blest, who calls himself thy friend!
Success his labors shall attend,
And safely guard his way.

VII.

Thy walls, remote from hostile fear,
Nor the loud voice of tumult hear,
Nor war's wild wastes deplore;
There smiling Plenty takes her stand,
And in thy courts with lavish hand
Has pour'd forth all her store.

VIII.

Let me, blest seat, my name behold
Among thy citizens enroll'd,
In thee for ever dwell.
Let charity my steps attend,
My sole companion and my friend,
And faith and hope farewell!

PSALM CXXIII.

ARGUMENT.

THIS Psalm containeth, 1, 2, an act of confidence in God, with, 3, 4, a prayer for deliverance from that reproach and contempt which infidelity and sensuality are wont to pour upon the afflicted people of God.

1. *Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens.*

The church, when distressed and persecuted upon earth, "lifteth up her eyes to him that dwelleth in the heavens," from thence beholding and ordering all things here below. It is by his permission that she is depressed and insulted; and he only can deliver her out of the hands of her enemies.

2. *Behold, as the eyes of servants* look *unto the hand of their masters,* and *as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes* wait *upon the* LORD *our God, until that he have mercy upon us.*

The servants of God, like other servants, if they are injured and suffer violence, expect redress and protection from the Master whose they are, and whom they serve. Under the law of Moses, a master was to demand satisfaction, and to have it made him, for any hurt done to his servant. And shall not the best of masters avenge the wrongs done to those who serve him; and done, perhaps, because they serve him? Without doubt, he will avenge them speedily, and reward the sufferers gloriously.

3. *Have mercy upon us, O* LORD, *have mercy upon us; for we are exceedingly filled with contempt.* 4. *Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease,* and *with the contempt of the proud.*

Unbelieving, ungodly, and worldly men, who are "at ease," and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches, will always be ready to cast upon the afflicted servants of Christ some portion of that reproach and contempt, which were so plentifully poured upon their blessed Master, in the day of his passion, and indeed through his whole life. With these they may justly complain that "their souls are exceedingly filled," insomuch that they are compelled to exclaim with redoubled earnestness, "Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us." And let them know, for their comfort, that the Lord will "have mercy upon them" in that day, when sensuality shall be succeeded by torment, and pride shall end in shame and confusion; when patient poverty shall inherit everlasting riches, and oppressed humility shall be exalted to a throne above the stars.

PSALM CXXIV.

ARGUMENT.

IN this Psalm, which, as we are informed by the title, hath David for its author, the church describeth the danger in which she had been, and giveth to God alone the glory of her deliverance out of it.

1. *If* it had not been *the* LORD *who was on our side, now may Israel say;* 2. *If* it had not been *the* LORD *who was on our side, when men rose up against us:* 3. *Then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us.*

The people of Israel, rescued from impending ruin, break forth into a joyful acknowledgment of that almighty aid, to which they were indebted for their deliverance. "Men" rose up against them, but "Jehovah" was on their side; men intended to devour, but God interposed to save. May not "the Israel of God" say, in like manner, "If the Lord had not been on our side," when our spiritual enemies, sin, death, and hell, were in arms against us, surely now "they had swallowed us up quick," and we had perished everlastingly. It is thou, O Lord Jesu, who hast wrought for us this great salvation; it is thou who from the beginning hast preserved thy church in the world, amidst the persecutions which must otherwise have put an end to its very existence.

4. *Then the waters had overwhelmed us;*

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the stream, or, *torrent, had gone over our soul:* 5. *Then the proud*, or, *swelling, waters had gone over our soul.*

The redeemed are astonished, upon looking back, at the greatness of the danger to which they had been exposed. They can compare the fury and insolence of their adversaries to nothing but overwhelming floods and desolating torrents; and they consider themselves as snatched by a miracle from instant destruction. Happy they, who are taken from the miseries of earth to the felicities of heaven, where they are neither tempted nor molested more. The devout Christian, whom, in perilous times, and towards the close of life, a gracious Providence has thrown ashore in some sequestered corner, from whence he views those secular tumults with which he hath no farther concern, is perhaps arrived at the next degree of happiness to that of just spirits made perfect.

6. *Blessed* be *the* LORD, *who hath not given us* as *a prey to their teeth.* 7. *Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped.*

The marvellous deliverance of Israel is illustrated by two other images. It is compared to the escape of a lamb from the jaws of a wolf, or a lion; and to that of a bird, by the breaking of the snare, in which it had been entangled, before the fowler came to seize and to kill it. Save us, O God, from the rage and subtilty of our spiritual adversary; save us from his teeth, when he would devour: from his snares, when he would deceive: suffer us not, either by persecution or temptation, to fall from thee; let the lion gnash his teeth, and the fowler look for his captive in vain; that so we too may sing the song of Zion in thy heavenly kingdom, and say, "Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us over for a prey unto their teeth. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped."

8. *Our help is in the name of the* LORD, *who made heaven and earth.*

The great lesson which this Psalm, from the beginning to the end, inculcates, is, that for every deliverance, whether of a temporal or spiritual nature, we should, in imitation of the saints above, ascribe "Salvation to God and to the Lamb."

PSALM CXXV.

ARGUMENT.

IN this Psalm, the church is comforted with the promises, 1, 2, of God's protection, and, 3, of his removing, in due time, from his inheritance the rod of the oppressor; when, 4, the faithful will be rewarded, and, 5, apostates punished with other workers of iniquity. Aben Ezra, as cited by Dr. Hammond, applyeth the Psalm to the days of Messiah.

1. *They that trust in the* LORD shall be *as Mount Zion*, which *cannot be removed*, but *abideth for ever.* 2. As *the mountains* are *round about Jerusalem, so the* LORD is *round about his people from henceforth even for ever.*

The stability of the church, and the protection afforded her by Jehovah, were of old represented by the mountain on which the divine presence resided, and by the hills which encompassed Jerusalem, so as to render that city in a manner impregnable. While her inhabitants continued to "trust in the Lord," this was the case. But when they became faithless and disobedient, she became weak, and like another city. Let not our "trust in God" be a presumptuous ungrounded assurance; but let it be a confidence springing from faith unfeigned, out of a pure heart, a good conscience, and fervent charity. Then shall our situation, whether as a church, or as individuals, resemble that of the holy mount in the beloved city, and our God will be unto us a fortress, and a wall round about. But let us never forget, that the promises to us, like those to Israel, are conditional: "Because of unbelief they were broken off; and we stand by faith."

3. *For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous: lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity.*

God may, and often doth, permit "the rod" or power "of the wicked to fall upon the lot of the righteous" in this world. But it is only for the purposes of chastisement, or probation. The rod is not suffered to "rest," or abide, there too long, "lest the righteous," harassed and worn down by oppression, and seeing no end of their calamities, should be tempted to "put their hands to iniquity," and practise that wickedness, which they find to prosper so well here below. The import of this verse seemeth to be the same with that of our Lord's prediction concerning the troubles of the latter days. "Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no nor ever will be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved. But for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." Matt. xxiv. 21, 22.

4. *Do good, O* LORD, *unto* those that be *good, and to* them that are *upright in heart.* 5. *As for such as turn aside unto their*

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crooked ways, the LORD *shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity*: but *peace* shall be *upon Israel*.

The "good and upright in heart" are they who stand steady in every change of circumstances; who complain not of God's dispensations, but, believing every thing to be best which he ordains, adhere to him with a will entirely conformed to his, in adversity no less than in prosperity. To these Jehovah will finally "do good;" and they shall receive the reward of their faith and patience; while such as, in time of trial, have fallen away, and returned no more, shall be "led forth" to punishment "with the workers of iniquity," to whose company their apostasy hath joined them. And then, "peace shall be upon the Israel of God," with joy and gladness, for evermore.

TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM CXXVI.

ARGUMENT.

IN this Psalm, the children of Zion, 1—3, describe the joy consequent upon their restoration from captivity; 4, they pray God to bring back the rest of their countrymen, and to complete his work; 5, they foresee and predict the success of their labors in rebuilding their ruined city with its temple, and cultivating again their desolated country. The return of Israel from Babylon holds forth a figure of the same import with the exodus of that people from Egypt. And this Psalm, like the prophecies of Isaiah, representeth the blessed effects of a spiritual redemption, in words primarily alluding to that temporal release.

1. *When the* LORD *turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.*

That Cyrus should issue a decree for the Jews to return to their own country, and to rebuild their city and temple; that he should dismiss such a number of captives, not only without money and without price, but should send them home laden with presents; Ezra, i. 1—4. this was the work of Jehovah, who only could thus "turn the captivity of Zion." A restoration so complete, so strange and unlooked for, brought about at once, without any endeavors used on the side of Israel, seemed in all these respects, as a "dream;" and the parties concerned, when they saw and heard such things, could scarcely believe themselves to be awake. That the King of kings, of his own mere love and mercy, should take pity on poor mankind, in their more grievous captivity under sin and death; that he should send his only Son to purchase their liberty, his Spirit to enrich, and conduct them to their country above, and his heralds to proclaim such unexpected deliverance to all the world; this likewise was the work of the same Jehovah, who only could THUS "turn again the captivity of his Zion." Sinners, when the tidings of a salvation so great and marvellous are preached to them, think themselves in a "dream," and with difficulty give credit even to the royal proclamation, though the great seal of heaven be affixed to it.

2. *Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The* LORD *hath done great things for them.* 3. *The* LORD *hath done great things for us;* whereof *we are glad.*

The people of God soon find, that they are not mocked with illusions, but that all about them is reality and truth. Then sorrow and sighing, fear and distrust, fly away together. Joy fills their hearts, and overflows by their tongues, in songs of praise. The nations hear, and are astonished, and own the hand of Jehovah in the restoration of his people; "Jehovah hath done great things for them." The chosen people echo back the gladsome sound, and reply, with transports of gratitude, "Jehovah hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad." Every word of this agreeth not more exactly to the return from Babylon, than it doth to that eternal redemption thereby prefigured, which is the grand subject of thanksgiving in the Christian church.

4. *Turn again our captivity,* O Lord, *as the streams in the south.*

The joy occasioned by Cyrus's proclamation having been described in a former part of the Psalm, we may now suppose some of the Jews ready to set out on their return home; at which time, and during their journey, they prefer this petition to God, that he would be pleased to bring back the rest of their countrymen, who, like "floods" rolling down upon the thirsty regions of the "south,"* might people the land, and by their labors put an end to the desolations of Judah. That

* I think the image is taken from the "torrents" in the deserts to the south of Judea: in Idumæa, Arabia Petræa, &c. a mountainous country. These torrents were constantly dried up in the summer; see Job, vi. 17, 18, and as constantly "returned" after the rainy season, and filled again their deserted channels. The point of the comparison seems to be the "return" and renewal of these (not "rivers" but) "torrents;" which yearly leave their beds dry, but fill them again; as the Jews had left their country desolate, but now "flowed again" into it. Bishop LOWTH, in MERRICK'S Annotations.—Dr. DURELL renders this verse as follows—"The turning of our captivity, O Lord, is as streams in the south."

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God would daily increase the number of true converts from the world to the church, to clear and cultivate the mystical vineyard, to build and to ornament the holy city, should be the prayer of every laborer in that vineyard, of every citizen in that city.

5. *They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.* 6. *He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves* with him.

The fatigue of travelling from Babylon to Judea; the melancholy prospect of a long-depopulated country, and ruined city; the toil necessary to be undergone, before the former could be again brought into order, and the latter rebuilt; all these considerations could not but allay the joy of the released captives, and even draw many tears from their eyes. They are therefore comforted with a gracious promise, that God would give a blessing to the labors of their hands, and crown them with success, so that they should once more see Jerusalem in prosperity, and behold in Zion the beauty of holiness. This promise is conveyed under images borrowed from the instructive scenes of agriculture. In the sweat of his brows the husbandman tills his land, and casts the seed into the ground, where, for a time, it lies dead and buried. A dark and dreary winter succeeds, and all seems to be lost. But at the return of spring, universal nature revives, and the once desolate fields are covered with corn, which, when matured by the sun's heat, the cheerful reapers cut down, and it is brought home with triumphant shouts of joy. Here, O disciple of Jesus, behold an emblem of thy present labor, and thy future reward. Thou "sowest," perhaps, "in tears;" thou doest thy duty amidst persecution and affliction, sickness, pain, and sorrow; thou laborest in the church, and no account is made of thy labors; no profit seems likely to arise from them. Nay, thou must thyself drop into the dust of death, and all the storms of that winter must pass over thee, until thy form shall be perished, and thou shalt see corruption. Yet, the day is coming, when thou shalt "reap in joy;" and plentiful shall be thy harvest. For thus thy blessed Master "went forth weeping, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, bearing precious seed," and sowing it around him, till at length his own body was buried, like a grain of wheat, in the furrow of the grave. But he arose, and is now in heaven; from whence he "shall doubtless come again with rejoicing," with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, "bringing his sheaves with him." Then shall every man receive the fruit of his works, and have praise of God.

PSALM CXXVII.

ARGUMENT.

If this Psalm were written by Solomon, or by David for Solomon, as the title importeth, it was probably used again at the time of rebuilding he city and temple, after the return from Babylon. But, indeed it is a Psalm which can never be out of season, the design of its author being to teach us the necessity of a dependence upon God and his blessing, in every work to which we set our hands. What is said with regard to an earthly house, city, and family, extendeth also to the spiritual house, city, and family of Christ, which are now, what Jerusalem, the temple, and the people of Israel, were in old time.

1. *Except the* LORD *build the house, they labor in vain that build it: except the* LORD *keep the city, the watchman waketh* but *in vain.*

In every undertaking, the blessing of God must accompany the labors of man, to render them effectual. No work can prosper without Him, nor can any design miscarry under his favor and protection, which are equally necessary to be obtained by the builder in time of peace, and by the soldier in time of war. But they, above all men, ought to implore the divine grace and benediction, who are employed either in building or defending the spiritual house and city of God; especially as the same persons, like the Jews after the captivity, surrounded by enemies always ready to obstruct the work, are often obliged to hold a sword in one hand, while they build with the other. Our own edification in faith and holiness must likewise be carried on by us in this attitude, by reason of the many temptations which are continually assailing us. It may also be remarked, that both Solomon and Zerubbabel had vainly labored to construct the first or the second material temple, unless Jehovah himself had built the true house for the reception of his glory, that is to say, the temple of Christ's body, and, after it was fallen down, had reared it again by a resurrection from the dead.

2. It is *in vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep.*

The Psalmist doth not, certainly, intend to say, that labor and diligence are vain, but that they are so, except the Lord be with the laborer: the business is not to be done by all the industry and pains, all the carking and caring in the world, without Him; whereas, if his aid be called in, if part of our time be spent in prayer, not the whole of it in prayerless toiling and moiling, our work will be-

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come easier, and go on better; a solicitude and anxiety for its success and completion will no longer prey upon our minds by day, and break our rest at night; we shall cheerfully fulfil our daily tasks, and then, with confidence and resignation, lay our heads upon our pillows, and God will "give to his beloved" a sweet and undisturbed "sleep," which shall fit them to return every morning, with renewed vigor and alacrity, to their stated employments. This seemeth to be the import of the verse. An obscurity has been occasioned in the translations, by rendering the adverb כֵּן so; "so he giveth" his beloved sleep;" in which form, this last part of the verse will not connect with what goes before. But if, כ be translated, like its kindred particle, אִם, "SURELY* he giveth his beloved sleep;" or, as Dr. Hammond renders it, "SINCE he giveth his beloved sleep;" the difficulty will vanish, and the sense appear to be as above. Nor can we easily find a more profitable piece of instruction, with regard to the management of all our concerns, temporal and spiritual.

3. *Lo, children* are *an heritage of the* LORD: and *the fruit of the womb* is his *reward.*

The labors of mankind, first in building houses and cities, and then in guarding and securing their possessions, are undergone, not with a view to themselves alone, but to their families, which they would establish and perpetuate. The Psalmist, therefore, in the preceding verses, having taught men to expect a happy settlement only from the favor of Jehovah, now directs them to look up to him for the farther blessing of a numerous and virtuous progeny. He can in a moment blast the most fruitful stock, or he can "make the barren woman to keep house, and to become a joyful mother of children." "Lo, children are an heritage of Jehovah" an heritage which he bestows on those who fear him; "the fruit of the womb is a reward" conferred by him, where he sees it will be a blessing indeed, upon faithful and pious parents. St. Paul calls the converts made by his ministry, his "children;" and all believers are the children of Christ, the "heritage" given him by his Father, the "reward" of his righteous life, and meritorious death; as it is written, "I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance." "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." Psal. ii. 8. Isa. liii. 11.

4. *As arrows* are *in the hand of a mighty man; so* are *children of the youth.*

Children, when well educated, are like so many "arrows in the hand of a strong man;" ready winged with duty and love, to fly to the mark; polished and keen, to grace and maintain the cause of their parents, to defend them from hostile invasions, and instantly to repel every assailant. The apostles and first Christians were arrows in the hand of Messiah, with which he encountered his enemies, and subdued the nations to the faith. When by the splendor of their sanctity, the power of their miracles, and the efficacy of their preaching, they pierced the hearts of thousands and ten-thousands, what were they but "arrows in the hand of, גִּבּוֹר, the Mighty One?" And in this instance likewise it may truly be said, that no well-nurtured son of Christ and the church will hear his father dishonored, or despise his mother when she is old.

5. *Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.*

In a house full of dutiful children consisteth the happiness of their parents, who then can never want friends; friends, that will at no time be "ashamed," but will at all times rejoice to appear for them, to meet their "enemies" and accusers "in the gate," or place of judgment;* there to answer any charge against them, to vindicate them in their persons, their good name, or their property. It is a glorious sight to behold children thus standing forth in the defence of their parents. In the multitude of true believers consist the glory of Christ, and the riches of the church. How forward were the primitive Christians to meet the enemies of these their spiritual parents "in the gate;" how ready, in their cause, to speak openly, and, having witnessed a good confession, to die by the hand of the executioner! Therefore shall they not be ashamed at the judgment of the last day, but shall then stand with great boldness before the face of such as have afflicted, persecuted, and tormented them. For their heavenly Father will then be their Judge, and will own, in his turn, the cause of his dutiful children, who for his sake endured tribulation, and loved not their lives unto the death. Confusion shall overwhelm the accuser of the brethren, with all the instruments of his malice; but glory, honor, and immortality shall be given to the children of God.

* This is the second of the senses given to this particle by Noldius, who cites, in confirmation of it, 1 Sam. ix. 13. 1 Kings, xx. 40.

* Mr. Merrick observes, that the gate was sometimes the seat of war, as well as the place of judicature. "Then was war in the gates." Judges, v. 8. He mentions a remarkable Chinese proverb: "When a son is born into a family, a bow and arrow are hung before the gate."

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PSALM CXXVIII.

ARGUMENT.

THIS Psalm containeth a promise made to him who, 1, feared Jehovah, and walked in his ways, that he should be blessed, 2, in his person, and, 3, 4, in his family, and that he should see the good of Jerusalem. The Psalm was, probably, sung at the marriages of the Israelites, as it is now a part of the matrimonial service among us. In its prophetical and exalted sense, it hath respect to the person, marriage, family, and city of Messiah.

1. *Blessed* is *every one that feareth the* LORD: *that walketh in his ways.*

Happiness belongeth not to the rich, the powerful, and the prosperous, as such; but in every state and condition, blessed is the man that "feareth Jehovah," that so feareth him as to obey him, and to "walk in his ways," notwithstanding all the obstructions he may meet with from the world, the flesh, and the devil. Blessed above all the sons of men, and the author of blessing to them all, was the man Christ Jesus, because above them all, and for them all, he feared, he loved, and he obeyed.

2. *For thou shalt eat the labor of thine hands: happy* shalt *thou* be, *and* it shall be *well with thee.*

The person is here beautifully changed, and to the man who feareth Jehovah is addressed an enumeration of those blessings which shall attend him. He is to "eat the labor of his hands," that is, the fruit, or returns of his labors. Hereby it is implied, that he is not to be idle, but to "labor," that he may eat; that he is not to be niggardly, but to "eat," when he has labored; that he is neither to be unjust, by living upon the labors, nor enslaved, by depending upon the bounty, of others, but to eat of "his own" labors; and that he, whose labors procure him a sustenance, hath enough to be "blessed" and happy. "Happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee:" every thing shall happen which God seeth to be best for thee in this life, and (as saith the Chaldee Paraphrast on the place) "it shall be good to thee in the world to come." The glory of Christ, and the salvation of mankind, were the fruits of his actions and his sufferings in the days of his flesh; so that, in the enjoyment of them, he doth no more than "eat of the labors of his hands:" or, to use the words of Isaiah, "he seeth of the travail of his soul, and is satisfied." Before he went hence, he took comfort in the reflection, "I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do:" John, xvii. 4. Happy shalt thou be, O Christian, and it shall be well with thee, if at thy latter end thou shalt be able to draw comfort from the same consideration.

3. *Thy wife* shall be *as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table.*

Marriage was ordained by God to complete the felicity of man in a state of innocence; and the benediction of heaven will ever descend upon it, when undertaken in "fear of the Lord." The vine, a lowly plant, raised with tender care, becoming, by its luxuriancy, its beauty, its fragrance, and its clusters, the ornament and glory of the house to which it is joined, and by which it is supported, forms the finest imaginable emblem of a fair, virtuous, and fruitful wife. The olive trees planted by the inhabitants of the eastern countries around their tables, or banqueting places in their gardens,* to cheer the eye by their verdure, and to refresh the body by their cooling shade, do no less aptly and significantly set forth the pleasure which parents feel, at the sight of a numerous and flourishing offspring. As marriage was from the beginning intended to represent the mystical union between Christ and his church, which union is spoken of in matrimonial language, through the Scriptures both of the Old and New Testament, we need but extend our view, to behold, under the imagery of the vine and the olive plants, the prolific spouse of Messiah, and the children of peace assembled round the table of their heavenly Father. See Psal. lxxx. 8. Rom. xi. 17.

4. *Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the* LORD.

Are temporal blessings, then, the reward of piety? They are not its only, nor chief reward, but are often "added," even under the new dispensation, to those who "first seek the kingdom of God, and his righteousness." When they are withholden, or withdrawn, it is for the security or increase of those more valuable blessings which are spiritual. There are times, when father, mother, brethren, sisters, wife, children, and lands, must be given up for Christ's and the Gospel's sake. But ample amends are promised to be made to all who thus part with earthly relations and possessions. They find in the church

* This is Bishop Patrick's idea. The learned and ingenious Mr. Harmer, in his very valuable "Observations on divers Passages of Scripture," (Vol. 1. p. 197, 2d edit.) disapproves of it; as, he says, "we find no such arbors in the Levant, nor is the tree very proper for the purpose." He thinks therefore the "table" refers to the "children" only, and not to the "olives." But Mr. Merrick, in his Annotations, produces some very good arguments on the side of Bishop Patrick.

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other fathers, mothers, brethren, sisters, children, &c. and at the resurrection they will "inherit all things," Rev. xxi. 7, and brighter coronets of glory shall sparkle from their heads. The Scriptures show us the servants of God in every state and condition; we view them rich and poor, honored and despised, sick and in health, married and single, childless and otherwise, in prosperity and in adversity; to teach us, that all things work together for good to them who love God: so that the believer hath comfort always. If temporal blessings be granted him, he accepteth them as shadows of those which are eternal; if they are denied, he remembereth that they are only shadows, and are therefore denied, that he may fix his thoughts and affections more firmly on the substance.

5. *The* LORD *shall bless thee out of Zion: and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem, all the days of thy life.* 6. *Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children,* and *peace upon Israel.*

Every true Israelite rejoiceth in the prosperity of Zion; a blessing upon the church diffuseth itself to all the members thereof; and the good of Jerusalem, with peace upon Israel, is all the good we can desire to see upon earth. Hereafter we shall see greater things than these. Jehovah from the heavenly Zion will bless us with the vision of his immortal glory; we shall see the good of the new Jerusalem, the wealth, beauty, and majesty of that holy city; we shall see the generations of the faithful walking in the light of it; with that everlasting peace and rest, which remain for the Israel of God. These are the blessings promised to Messiah, and to his seed, for evermore.

PSALM CXXIX.

ARGUMENT.

IN the former part of this Psalm, 1—4, the church declareth herself to have been often assailed and persecuted by her enemies, but as often rescued and preserved by Jehovah; in the latter part of it, 5—8, she predicteth the miserable end of all those who hate Zion.

1. *Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth, may Israel now say:* 2. *Many a time have they afflicted me from my outh: et the have not prevailed against me.*

Affliction is nothing new to the people of God. Many a time have the righteous been under persecution, from the hour when Cain rose up against his brother Abel, to this day. Like the bush which Moses beheld in the desert, the church hath "burned with fire," but is not yet "consumed:" and for the same reason, because God is in the midst of her.* He who took our nature upon him, was also "afflicted from his youth," but his enemies "prevailed not finally against him." And it is observable, that what God spake, by his prophet Hosea, concerning Israel, "when Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt," is by St. Matthew applied to Christ; "Joseph took the young child and his mother, by night, and departed into Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet. Out of Egypt have I called my son:" Matt. ii. 14. Hos. xi. 1. The truth is, that there subsisted between Christ and the church an union like that between the head and the members of the same body; they are therefore called by the same name, ISRAEL, and what is said concerning one, frequently admitteth of an application to the other. He became like us by taking our nature, and we become like him by receiving his grace. Our sufferings are accounted as his; and his righteousness spoken of as ours.

3. *The plowers plowed upon my back: they made long their furrows.* 4. *The* LORD *is righteous: he hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked.*

The former of these two verses expresseth a state of great affliction, the latter, a deliverance from that state. The word חרש, which signifies to dig, or cut the ground, and so, to plow, is also used simply for cutting, carving, or graving; see Exod. xxxv. 33. Jer. xvii. 1. Being here applied to the back of captives, and cords having been the instruments of it, in all reason it is to be understood of scourging, which cuts, and, as it were, digs, and plows, and makes furrows in the flesh; and the longer the cords of the scourges are, the longer are the wounds and furrows. For our sakes he who knew no sin "gave his back to the smiters," Isa. l. 6: and permitted those "plowers to make long their furrows upon it." But "the righteous Lord cut asunder the cords of the wicked;" vengeance overtook the wretched instruments of his sufferings; and the persecutors of his servants shall perish in like manner, as the Psalmist proceedeth to assure us in the verses following.

5. *Let them all,* or, *they all shall, be confounded and turned back that hate Zion.*

* Ecclesia jam inde ab initio in Abel, in Enoch, in Noe, in Abraham, in Lot, in Ægyptiaca servitute, in Moyse, et Prophetis, graves perpessa inimicos; dicit illa quidem sæpe a juventute se fuisse oppugnatam: nihilo tamen secius pervenisse ad senectutum, ac ne in senectute quidem opprimi posse. Victus enim qui sæviebat, vicit qui sufferebat. BOSSUET.

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Since the ways of God are equal, the destruction which hath lighted on former persecutors of the church affordeth an assurance, that all, in every age, who hate Zion, shall, at the day of final retribution, if not before that day, feel the weight of his arm, who is the Saviour, the King, and the God of Zion.

6. *Let them*, or, *they shall, be as the grass* upon *the house tops, which withereth afore it groweth up:* Heb. *is pulled up.** 7. *Wherewith the mower filleth not his hand: nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom.* 8. *Neither do they which go by say, The blessing of the* LORD be *upon you: we bless you in the name of the* LORD.

The transient prosperity of mortal man is often in sacred writ compared to grass, the history of which is contained in these few words, "It cometh up, and is cut down." But here the comparison is carried still farther. Not the common grass in the field, but "grass growing on the house tops" is selected to convey the idea of bad men; grass, which having no depth of earth, into which it may strike its roots, doth not await the hand of the gatherer, but "withereth" even "before it is plucked up." And then, so thin, so wretched, and so unprofitable is the crop, that none are employed to collect and carry it in; none to whom passengers might address those acclamations and salutations, customary at such times, as "The LORD be with you, bless you," &c. Ruth, ii. 4. Thus, while the felicity of Zion's children is rooted and grounded in Christ, that of her enemies hath no foundation at all. While the church subsisteth from generation to generation, the kingdoms and empires, that have persecuted her, fade and wither away of themselves. And at the general harvest of the world, when the righteous shall be carried by angels, with joyful acclamations, into the mansions prepared for them above, the wicked, unregarded by the heavenly reapers, and unblessed by all, shall become fuel for a fire that goeth not out; resembling, in this their sad end, likewise, that worthless grass, "which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven."

PSALM CXXX.

ARGUMENT.

THIS is the sixth of those which are styled "Penitential Psalms." It is calculated for the use of the church, or any member thereof; and containeth, 1, 2, a complaint of great distress; 3, a confession of man's sinfulness; 4—8, an act of faith in the divine mercy, and the promised redemption.

1. *Out of the depths have I cried unto thee,* O LORD. 2. LORD, *hear my voice: let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.*

From the depths of sin, and the misery occasioned by sin, the penitent, like another Jonas, entombed in the whale's belly, and surrounded by all the waves of the ocean, crieth unto God for help and salvation. Fervent prayer will find its way, through every obstruction, to the ears of him who sitteth upon his holy hill. And may not the bodies of the faithful, buried in the dust, be said to cry, out of the depths of the grave, for a joyful resurrection, according to the promise and the pattern of Christ, who, after three days, came forth from the heart of the earth, as Jonas did from the belly of the whale?

3. *If thou,* LORD, *shouldest mark iniquities,* O LORD, *who shall stand?*

A reason is here urged, why God should spare and pardon the suppliant, namely, because was he accurately to note the offences of the best men, and to produce them in judgment against the offenders, no man could stand in that judgment, but the whole race of Adam must continue to eternity under the dominion of sin and death; which a gracious and merciful God would not permit to be the case. It is accordingly declared in the next verse, that measures had been taken to prevent so deplorable a catastrophe.

4. *But* there is *forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.*

True repentance is founded upon the sense of our own wretchedness, and faith in the divine mercy. Without the former, we should never seek for pardon and grace; without the latter, we should despair of finding them. The Psalmist, therefore, having in the three preceding verses, expressed the one, now maketh profession of the other. "There is forgiveness with thee;" thou wilt not "mark iniquities," or leave us to the rigors of strict justice, but thou hast devised means that we perish not for ever: thou hast provided an atonement, and in virtue of that atonement, the sinner may obtain pardon; he need not, therefore, reject thy service, and cast himself away in despair, but is encouraged to serve thee acceptably through faith, with godly fear: "there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared." Or the meaning may be, Thou forgivest man, that so, being re-

* Mr. Harmer takes the idea of the Psalmist to be, "Which withereth before it unsheaths its ear." Observ. 11. 463.

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stored to thy favor, and endued with thy grace, he may thenceforth fear, or serve thee, as it becomes one who hath obtained mercy to do.

5. *I wait for the* LORD, *my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope.* 6. *My soul* waiteth *for the* LORD, *more than they that watch for the morning:* I say, more than *they that watch for the morning.*

The repetitions here do beautifully express that ardent desire which the contrite soul hath for the salvation of God. Dr. Hammond seemeth to have given the true construction of ver. 6. נפשי לאדני, "My soul to the Lord, that is, riseth, cometh, or hasteneth to the Lord, משכרים לבקר from the morning watches, that is, from the time when they hasten to their watches, in other words, the guards every morning that hasten to their watches, are not earlier than I am in my daily addresses to God. Who these watches or guards of the morning are, the Chaldee hath best expressed: They that observe the morning watches, that they may offer their morning oblation, that is, the priests which in their turns officiated; or rather, some officers of theirs, which were peculiarly appointed from a tower to expect the first appearance of break of day." With such earnestness did the ancient church expect the appearance of that day-spring from on high, which was, in the fulness of time, to visit the world. With equal earnestness have the faithful since looked out for the dawning of that last morning, which is to abolish sin, and put an end to sorrow.

7. *Let Israel hope in the* LORD: *for with the* LORD there is *mercy, and with him* is *plenteous redemption.* 8. *And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities,* or *sins.*

These verses are perfectly evangelical. The church of Israel was exhorted to "hope" in Jehovah, because with him there was "mercy, and plenteous redemption." And of what nature was that redemption? A redemption from sin; "he shall redeem Israel from all his SINS;" consequently, from all trouble and misery, which are but the effects of sin, and will cease when their cause shall be finally taken away. Now what is this, but the Gospel itself? or where is the difference between this of the Psalmist, "He shall redeem Israel from all his sins," and that of the Evangelist, "Thou shalt call his name JESUS, for he shall SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR SINS?" Matt. i. 21. The Israel of God, or church universal, "hoping" in the same "mercy" and the same "plenteous redemption," expecteth the full accomplishment of this gracious promise, at the second advent of her Saviour, when the penalty of sin shall be taken off, and death be swallowed up in victory.

PSALM CXXXI.

ARGUMENT.

THIS Psalm containeth, 1, 2, a description of true humility, and resignation to the will of God, with, 3, an exhortation to the practice thereof. It is, most probably, a Psalm of David, and is eminently applicable to Messiah, in his state of humiliation on earth. Happy would it be for the world, if all his disciples could imbibe the spirit of this short but lovely Psalm, and copy after the example which it setteth before them.

1. LORD, *my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.*

Pride beginneth in the "heart," and discovereth itself in the "eyes," the countenance, and the carriage; thinking nothing "too high for it," it is always aiming at still "great matters," scheming to be at the top of earthly grandeur; and, when there, restless because it can go no further. Of this disposition the Son of David, like his father and representative of old, was by his enemies affirmed to be; he was accused of affecting the sovereignty, and therefore hunted and persecuted even to the death. But how truly do these words of the Psalmist delineate his real character! He was not "haughty," but "meek and lowly in heart;" his "eyes" were not "lofty," but kindly regarded the meanest object that presented itself to them; he looked not to "great matters," and "high things," but chose to be, and to be esteemed, the least and lowest of all.

2. *Surely I have behaved,* or, *subdued, and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul* is *even as a weaned child.*

A child newly weaned mourneth because of the favorite aliment which is withdrawn from him, but depending absolutely on the mother for every thing, learneth to acquiesce in her treatment of him, and quietly to accept what it shall please her to give. Such was the humble resignation of the Lamb of God to the will of his heavenly Father, under the severest dispensations, when even the divine presence, and that support which it afforded, seemed to have been withdrawn: "Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit!" Who, then, can expect to enter into the kingdom of heaven, "except he be

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converted, and become as a little child?" Matt. xviii. 3.

3. *Let Israel hope in the* LORD *from henceforth and for ever.*

After the example, therefore, of the King of Israel, who thus demeaned himself in his afflictions, lowly, contented, and resigned, casting all his care upon the Father who cared for him, and patiently waiting his time for deliverance and salvation; after this their example and pattern, let his faithful people hope and trust, not in themselves, their wisdom, or their power, but in Jehovah alone, who will not fail to exalt them, as he hath already exalted their Redeemer, if they do but follow his steps.

TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM CXXXII.

ARGUMENT.

THIS is one of the Proper Psalms, which the church hath appointed to be used on Christmas-day. It containeth, 1—5, a petition that Jehovah would be mindful of the zeal shown by his servant David, in preparing a place for his habitation. 6, the exultation of the faithful upon hearing the glad tidings, that God would dwell among them; and, 7, their resolution to worship at the place which he had chosen for that purpose; 8—10, an address to Jehovah, used by Solomon at the dedication of the temple, whence some have thought him to have been the author of the Psalm; 11—18, the substance of God's promises made to David and to his seed. The whole Psalm is perfectly well adapted to the festival of the incarnation, as the following comment will, it is hoped, abundantly demonstrate.

1. LORD, *remember David,* and *all his afflictions.*

Israel beseecheth Jehovah to be mindful of those sorrows and sufferings, which had been undergone by his servant David, ere he attained to the throne, and established the ancient church in the beauty of holiness. That God would "remember" the far greater "afflictions" sustained for our sake by Messiah in the days of his humiliation, when, through much tribulation, he accomplished our redemption, and entered into his glory, is the petition preferred, in these words, by us Christians.

2. *How he sware unto the* LORD, and *vowed unto the mighty* GOD *of Jacob;* 3. *Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed;* 4. *I will not give sleep to mine eyes,* or *slumber to mine eyelids,* 5. *Until I find out a place for the* LORD, *an habitation for the mighty* GOD *of Jacob.*

In all circumstances and situations, David was solicitous for the tabernacle and service of God. Of the oath and vow here mentioned, we have, indeed, no account in the sacred history; but we read, 2 Sam. vii. 2, of the uneasiness which he expressed to Nathan the prophet, at the thought of his dwelling in a palace of cedar, while the ark of God dwelt only within the curtains of a tent. Nay, we find, by 1 Chron. xvi. 43, that he did not bless, and consequently did not inhabit, his own house, until he had brought the ark to Zion, where the temple was afterwards erected. He could take neither pleasure nor rest, until a place was prepared for the the residence of Jehovah in the midst of his people; and from thenceforth he gave himself, with unwearied diligence, to lay in a plentiful store of the most costly materials, silver, gold, and precious stones, which were employed by his son and successor Solomon, in constructing the magnificent and mystic edifice. Thus, in the covenant of grace, did the Son of God engage not to take possession of his heavenly palace, nor to enter into his eternal rest, until he had prepared upon the earth a place for the residence of the Lord; a building framed of materials more precious than gold and silver, more bright and beautiful than rubies, emeralds, and diamonds. All this was planned and executed by one and the same person, who first suffered in meekness and patience, like David, then reigned in glory and peace, like Solomon. The believer should spare no pains, no time, no thought, to find out and prepare in his heart an habitation for the God of Jacob, since our Lord hath graciously vouchsafed to make this general promise to us all, "If a man love me, my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." John, xiv. 23.

6. *Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah: we found it in the fields of the wood.*

In other word, as Bishop Patrick hath paraphrased this verse, "And now, behold, the Lord himself, to our great joy, hath told us the very place where he will fix his habitation, 1 Chron. xxi. 18. 26, in the territory of Bethlehem Ephrata,* Gen. xxxv. 13. 19, in the fields of that forest, where the angel stood and directed David to build an altar to the Lord:" 1 Chron. xxi. 18. xxii. 1. Bethlehem Ephratah was the city of David; it was likewise the city wherein the Son of

* Jerusalem, as Mr. Merrick observes from Geicrus, being situated not far from Bethlehem, might be comprehended in the region of Ephrata; or, באפרתה may be rendered "near Ephrata."

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David was born, as the prophet Micah hath foretold; "And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the cities of Judah, for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel," Micah, v. 2, cited by the chief priests and scribes to Herod, Matt. ii. 6. Christians, as well as Jews, may therefore say, and upon the festival of Christ's nativity, using this Psalm, they do say, "Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah;" for there the angel first proclaimed the news of the incarnation to the shepherds: "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ, the Lord:" Luke, ii. 10. There was "found" the true tabernacle and temple, "not made with hands, the place for Jehovah, the habitation for the mighty God of Jacob."

7. *We will go into his tabernacles: we will worship at his footstool.*

If this were the resolution of Israelites, who saw the incarnation only in type and figure, how much more ought it to be ours, who live since the accomplishment of that which was foreshown; since the Word, made flesh, hath dwelt upon the earth, and the church hath been erected among the nations? If they worshipped the God of Israel, who then dwelt in the holy of holies between the cherubim, shall not we worship the same divine person, who, though ascended up on high above all heavens, yet hath assured us, that where two or three are gathered together in his name, there is he in the midst of them?

8. *Arise, O* LORD, *into thy rest; thou, and the ark of thy strength.*

When the ark marched before the children of Israel, to find out a resting place it is recorded, Numb. x. 35, 36, that Moses said, "Rise up, Jehovah, and let thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate thee, flee before thee;" and when it rested, he said, "Return, or bring back, the many thousands of Israel." The verse before us was used, with the two succeeding verses, by Solomon, as the conclusion of his prayer at the dedication of the temple, 2 Chron. vi. 41. The purport of the petition, therefore, was, that the presence of Jehovah might rest upon Zion, and dwell in the house prepared for it, as the same presence hath since dwelt in Christ, and is to be with the Christian church to the end of the world.

9. *Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy.*

The ark being placed in the temple, prayer is next made for the ministers of religion, that they might, through grace, be invested with righteousness as with a garment, and be both covered and adorned with a robe of inviolable sanctity; that spiritual joy might fill their hearts, and break forth in songs of praise to the Lord God of Israel. Let not those, who have obtained the evangelical priesthood, be exceeded, by the sons of Levi, in holiness and alacrity.

10. *For thy servant David's sake, turn not away the face of thine anointed.*

Solomon beseecheth God, for the sake of his favorite servant David, and the promises made to him and his seed, that he would not deny the request of David's son, now "anointed" to be king over Israel, and, by so doing, confound, put him to shame, or "turn away his face." That this is the meaning of the phrase, is plain from 1 Kings, ii. 16, where Adonijah says to Bathsheba, "And now I ask one petition of thee, deny me not;" in the Hebrew, "turn not away my face." A Christian asketh nothing but in the name, and for the sake, of the Son of David, Jesus Christ our Lord, in whom all the promises are Yea and Amen, and in whom whosoever believeth shall never be confounded, or denied that which it is really good and profitable for him to receive.

11. *The* LORD *hath sworn* in *truth unto David: he will not turn from it; of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.*

That this is a prophecy of Messiah, we have the authority of St. Peter to say; Acts, ii. 30, "David, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up CHRIST to sit on his throne," &c. This promise to David occurs, 2 Sam. vii. 12, and hath a twofold sense, relating to Solomon in type and shadow, to Christ in truth and substance. See more on Ps. lxxxix. 3, 4.

12. *If thy children will keep my covenant and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon thy throne for evermore.*

The promises of God to Christ are absolute; but to his "children," as well as those of David, they are conditional; so that our interest in them dependeth on our faith, our obedience, our perseverance. "Behold," saith St. Paul, "the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but towards thee, goodness, if thou continue in that goodness; otherwise, thou also shalt be cut off." Rom. xi. 22.

13. *For the* LORD *hath chosen Zion: he hath desired* it *for his habitation.* 14. *This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it.*

How ineffable is the love of God to man, that he should use such expressions as these

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concerning his church! He is pleased to say, that it is his desire to dwell with us; yet how little do we desire to dwell with him! In Zion he fixed his abode, and there continued, till the iniquities of Israel provoked him to forsake his holy mountain, and to give up Jerusalem for a prey to the spoilers. Since that time, his tabernacle has been removed into the possession of the Gentiles. Forsake not this thy new Zion, O God, and deliver not us thy people, in like manner, sinful as we are, into the hands of the enemy and the avenger.

15. *I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread.* 16. *I will also clothe her priests with salvation: and her saints shall shout aloud for joy.*

That city in which the King of heaven deigns to place his throne, can want no manner of thing that is good. There will be always plenty of provision for the body and for the soul. The poor will be satisfied with bread, and to the poor in spirit will be given the bread of eternal life. Salvation will God appoint for a wall and a bulwark around the priests and the temple; joy and gladness shall be heard within, thanksgiving and the voice of melody. What a dreadful reverse of all this do we behold in the present state of the once glorious, but now desolated, Jerusalem! Let not any Christian church, after what has happened to that city, be high-minded, but let all fear.

17. *There will I make the horn of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed.*

Bishop Patrick hath well paraphrased this verse: "There, namely, in Jerusalem, will I make the regal power and majesty of David to put forth itself afresh in his royal successors: no sooner shall one be extinguished, but another shall shine in such splendor, as shall give a lustre to the name of that anointed servant of mine, till the great prince, the Messiah, appear:" then will the horn of salvation be raised up in the house of David, to subdue the empires of the world, and to vanquish all opposition; then shall the Branch of Jehovah bud into beauty and glory upon the earth; then shall the lamp of Israel become a sun of righteousness, burning and shining with lustre inextinguishable, to all eternity. That this verse doth mystically refer to Christ, the Jews confess, as Dr. Hammond has observed. So said R. Saadiah, "The Lamp is the King, which illuminates the nations:" and Kimchi, "The Horn of David, is the Messias."

18. *His enemies will I clothe with shame: but upon himself shall his crown flourish.*

It is here predicted, that God would blast and bring to nothing every design formed to destroy the house of David, until King Messiah should arise out of it, to sit upon the throne of his father. In him all the promises centre, and the kingdom is established for ever: "His enemies," who will not have him to reign over them, shall, at the last day, be "clothed with shame," and everlasting confusion; "but upon himself shall his crown flourish," filling heaven and earth with the brightness of its glory.

PSALM CXXXIII.

ARGUMENT.

THIS short but pleasing Psalm was composed either to recommend unity among the tribes of Israel, or to celebrate it when it had taken place. Bishop Patrick justly observes, that "it was as fitly used by the first Christians, to express their joy for the blessed union of Jews and Gentiles; and may now serve the uses of all Christian societies, whose happiness lies in holy peace and concord." It containeth, 1, a rapturous exclamation on the comforts and advantages of union, which, 2, 3, are illustrated by the two exquisite similitudes of the holy anointing oil and of dew.

1. *Behold, how good and how pleasant* it is, *for brethren to dwell together in unity.*

Many things are good which are not pleasant; and many pleasant, which are not good. But unity among brethren, whether civil or religious, is productive both of profit and pleasure. Of profit, because therein consisteth the welfare and security of every society; of pleasure, because mutual love is the source of delight, and the happiness of one becomes, in that case, the happiness of all. It is unity alone, which gives beauty, as well as strength, to the state; which renders the church, at the same time, "fair as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners." Cant. vi. 10.

2. It is *like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard,* even *Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments;* 3. *As the dew of Hermon,** and as the dew *that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the* LORD *commanded the blessing,* even *life for evermore.*

"Unity, beginning in the prince, and diffused through the people, is here illustrated,"

* Bishop Lowth seemeth fully to have justified our translators in supplying the ellipsis as they have done, and thereby removing the absurdity of making the dew of Hermon, a mountain on one side of Jordan towards the eastern extremity of Canaan, descend on the mountain of Zion, which was situated on the other side of Jordan, at Jerusalem.

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ctor Delany, "by two images, the most apt and beautiful that ever were imagined. Kingdoms are considered as bodies politic, of which the king is the head, and the people, in their several ranks and orders, the parts and members. A spirit of union beginning upon the prince, whose person is sacred, is like oil poured upon the head of Aaron, which naturally descends, and spreads itself over all the parts of the body, and diffuses beauty and fragrance over the whole, reaching even to the skirts of the garment. Oil is, without question, the finest emblem of union that ever was conceived. It is a substance consisting of very small parts, which yet, by their mutual adhesion, constitute one uniform, well united, and useful body. The sacred oil carries the idea and the advantage of union yet farther; which being extracted from various spices, yet made up one well cohering and more valuable compound. The next image carries the exhortation to union, and the advantages of it still higher. Hermon was the general name of one mountain, comprehending many lesser and lower hills, under the surround of a greater. Union in any nation is the gift of God; and therefore unity among brethren, beginning from the king, is like the dew of heaven, which falling first upon the higher summit of Hermon (refreshing and enriching wherever it falls,) naturally descends to Zion, a lower; and thence even to the humble valleys. Zion was the centre of union to all the tribes: there God himself had promised his people rest, and peace from their enemies; which, however, were of little value without union and harmony among themselves."* Thus far this learned and pious author, whose explanation of the Psalmist's imagery, as descriptive of civil unity in the state, is so just and elegant, that I could not forbear transcribing the passage at length. It only remains to be added, that these divine pictures receive an additional beauty, and the coloring is much heightened, by their being viewed in another light, as representations of spiritual unity in the church. The spirit of heavenly love was that oil of gladness which Jehovah poured without measure on him who is the high priest and head of his church. Insinuating and healing, comforting and exhilarating, it is diffused from him over his body mystical, even down to the least and lowest members; "of his fulness have we all received;" and, as it is said of Mary's box of spikenard in the Gospel, "the house is filled with the odour of the ointment." Nor did the dew of heaven, in time of drought, ever prove more refreshing and beneficial to the mountains of Judah, than are the influences of grace, when descending in soft silence from above upon the church; in the union and communion of which, God hath "commanded the blessing, even life for evermore." O come the day, when division shall cease, and enmity be done away; when the tribes of the spiritual Israel shall be united in a bond of eternal charity, under the true David, in the Jerusalem which is above; and saints and angels shall sing this lovely Psalm together!

* Life of King David, vol. iii. p. 204.

PSALM CXXXIV.

ARGUMENT.

With this Psalm, Christians in the church, like the Levites of old in the temple, 1, 2, call upon each other to bless God, and, 3, upon God to bless them all.

1. *Behold, bless ye the* Lord, *all* ye *servants of the* Lord, *which by night stand in the house of the* Lord. 2. *Lift up your hands* in *the sanctuary, and bless the* Lord.

The first word in this verse, "Behold," seemeth to point at the reasons which the priests in the temple had to bless Jehovah; as if it had been said, Behold, the house of God is built, the holy services are appointed, and the Lord hath given you rest from your enemies, that you may serve him acceptably; set about it, therefore, with gratitude and alacrity. We read, 1 Chron. ix. 33. that the Levitical singers were "employed in their work day and night;" to the end, doubtless, that the earthly sanctuary might bear some resemblance of that above, where, St. John tells us, the redeemed "are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple:" Rev. vii. 15. Christians are the redeemed of the Lord, redeemed from the guilt and dominion of sin, delivered out of the hands of their enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil, that they may become the servants of Christ. He hath built his church, and in it he wills that men pray, lifting up holy hands, and that they offer the sacrifices of thanksgiving. "Behold," therefore, "bless the Lord Jesus, all ye servants of his;" bless him in the cheerful and busy hours of day; bless him in the solemn and peaceful watches of the night; making melody, even then, in your hearts, at least, if not with your voices. The pious Mr. Nicholas Farrer exhibited, in the last century, an instance of a Protestant family, in which a constant course of psalmody was appointed, and so strictly kept up, that, through the whole four-and-twenty hours of day and night, there was no portion of time, when some of the members were not employed in perform-

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ing that most pleasant part of duty and devotion. The reader may see the curious life of this extraordinary person, as drawn up by Dr. Turner, bishop of Ely, in the Christian Magazine, vol. ii. p. 356.

3. *The* LORD *that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion.*

The two preceding verses, as Mr. Mudge observes, seem directed to the priests of the temple, by some person, probably of consequence, come up to pay his devotions. This third verse is therefore returned, as from the priests. And thus it is, that prayer and praise, which by grace are caused to ascend from our hearts to God, will certainly return in the benedictions of heaven upon our souls and bodies, our persons and our families, our church and our country; like the vapors, which exhaled by the warmth of the sun from the bowels of the earth, mount upwards into the air, but soon fall again in fruitful showers, causing the little hills to rejoice, and the valleys to laugh and sing.

PSALM CXXXV.

ARGUMENT.

IN this Psalm, 1, 2, the servants of Jehovah are exhorted to praise him, 3, on account of his goodness; of the pleasure to be found in the employment; 4, of his peculiar mercies shown to Israel; 5, of his infinite superiority over the gods of the nations, manifested, 6, 7, in the works of creation, 8—14, in his dealings with the church, and with her adversaries. 15—18, The folly of idolatry, and of those who practise it, is described; and, 19—21, Israel is again stirred up to praise Jehovah.

1. *Praise ye the* LORD. *Praise ye the name of the* LORD; *praise* him, *O ye servants of the* LORD. 2. *Ye that stand in the house of the* LORD, *in the courts of the house of our God.* 3. *Praise the* LORD; *for the* LORD *is good: sing praises unto his name: for* it is *pleasant.*

All the servants of God, they, more especially, who minister in the temple, are repeatedly, as in the foregoing Psalm, excited to praise their blessed Master. Two reasons are assigned why they should do this. First, the goodness of that Master, and secondly, the pleasantness of the employment. The latter of these reasons hath a natural and necessary dependence on the former. A sense of the divine mercy will tune our hearts and voices to praise. We, who are upon earth, often find ourselves indisposed for the duty of thanksgiving, because the concerns of the body, the cares and pleasures of life, extinguish, for a time, this sense in us, until grace, prayer, and meditation render it again lively and active. In the inhabitants of heaven, who behold God without the veil of matter interposed, it is always so; and, therefore, they rest not day or night from singing hallelujahs, nor cease one moment to rejoice in God their Saviour.

4. *For the* LORD *hath chosen Jacob unto himself*, and *Israel for his peculiar treasure.* 5. *For I know that the* LORD is *great, and* that *our Lord* is *above all gods.*

A third reason why the children of Israel should praise the name of Jehovah, was the circumstance of their having been selected from among the nations to be his church, to receive the law and the promises, to have his presence residing in the midst of them, and to be the guardians of the true faith and worship. And a fourth reason, was the superiority of Jehovah their God over the gods of the heathen, and consequently over those who worshipped them; from whence followed this comfortable inference, that he was able to protect and to defend his people against every enemy that had evil will at Zion. Shall not we Christians, then, praise the same gracious Lord, who hath chosen us out of the world, who hath given unto us his Gospel, who dwelleth in us by his Spirit, and who, by that Spirit, maketh us more than conquerors over our spiritual adversaries?

6. *Whatsoever the* LORD *pleased*, that *did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.*

The pre-eminence of Jehovah above the gods of the nations is evinced by this consideration, that he, at the beginning, created and formed those powers of nature, whose operations in the heavens, the earth, and the waters, led the heathen world, after it had lost the knowledge of the Creator, to adore the creature as independent. Let us praise him, who, in the intellectual as in the material world, is Lord and King; who is obeyed by the angels in heaven, served by the church upon earth, and feared by the spirits imprisoned in deep places beneath.

7. *He causeth the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain; he bringeth the wind out of his treasuries.*

They who in old time paid their devotions to the elements, imagined those elements to be capable of giving or withholding rain at pleasure. Therefore we find the prophet Jeremiah reclaiming that power to Jehovah, as the God who made and governed the world: "Are there any among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain? or can the heavens give showers? Art thou not he, O Jehovah our God? Therefore we will wait upon

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thee: for thou hast made all these things:" Jer. xiv. 22. Among the Greeks and Romans we meet with a Jupiter possessed of the thunder and lightning, and an Æolus ruling over the winds. The Psalmist teacheth us to restore the celestial artillery to its rightful owner. Jehovah, the God of Israel, and the Creator of the universe, contrived the wonderful machinery of light and air, by which vapors are raised from the earth, compacted into clouds, and distilled in rain. At his command the winds are suddenly in motion, and as suddenly at rest again; we hear the sound, but cannot tell whence they come, or whither they go; as if they were taken from secret storehouses of the Almighty, and then laid up till their service was required again. The same idea God himself is pleased to give us in the book of Job, where he describeth the instruments of his power, as so many weapons of war in the arsenal of a mighty prince: "Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war? By what way is the light parted, which scattereth the east wind upon the earth? Who hath divided a watercourse for the overflowing of waters? or a way for the lightning of thunder, to cause it to rain on the earth?" Job, xxxviii. 22. &c. It is a great instance of the divine wisdom and goodness, that lightning should be accompanied by rain, to soften its rage, and prevent its mischievous effects. Thus, in the midst of judgment, does God remember mercy. The threatenings in his word against sinners are like lightning; they would blast and scorch us up, were it not for his promises made in the same word to penitents, which, as a gracious rain, turn aside their fury, refreshing and comforting our affrighted spirits.

8. *Who smote the first-born of Egypt, both of man and beast.* 9. Who *sent tokens and wonders into the midst of thee, O Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his servants.*

Egypt was the theatre of the grand contest between the God of Israel and the gods of the heathen. The superiority of the former over the latter was shown in every possible way by the miracles of Moses, which demonstrated all the powers of nature to be under the dominion of Jehovah, and to act at his command; so that, instead of being able to protect, they were made to torment and destroy their deluded votaries. See more on Psal. lxxviii. 44, &c. The objects of a man's sin frequently become, in the end, the instruments of his punishment.

10. *Who smote great nations, and slew mighty kings;* 11. *Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og king of Bashan, and all the kingdoms of Canaan:* 12. *And gave their land* for *an heritage, an heritage unto Israel his people.*

The victories gained by Israel over Sihon and Og, in their passage to Canaan, and afterwards over the idolatrous kings of that country, are more proofs of the same point. For Israel therefore conquered, because Jehovah fought for them, and put them in possession of that good land, when the iniquity of its old inhabitants was full, and cried to heaven for vengeance. The enemies we have to encounter in our way to the promised inheritance, will also, if vigorously opposed, fall before us. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." But it is God who fighteth for us, and with us, who giveth us the victory, and putteth us in possession, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

13. *Thy name, O* LORD, endureth *for ever;* and *thy memorial, O* LORD, *throughout all generations.* 14. *For the* LORD *will judge his people, and he will repent himself concerning his servants.*

By the destruction of Pharaoh, with his Egyptians, and by the battles and victories of Joshua; much more, by the overthrow of the spiritual Pharaoh, with his infernal host, and by the battles and victories of the true Joshua, Jehovah hath gotten him glory, and his name is magnified in the church from age to age. The people whom he hath redeemed, may, indeed, for the chastisement of their iniquities, he sometimes delivered into the hands of their enemies, and oppressed by them. But it is only to show them their transgressions, and lead them to repentance. When this effect is wrought, he is always ready to "judge them," to plead and avenge their cause; he "repenteth him" of the evil, and averteth it; he is entreated for the land, and becometh gracious to his servants.

15. *The idols of the heathen* are *silver and gold, the work of men's hands.* 16. *They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not.* 17. *They have ears, but they hear not; neither is there* any *breath in their mouths.* 18. *They that make them are like unto them:* so is *every one that trusteth in them.*

In these verses is set forth the difference between the God of Israel, and the idols of the nations, as also between the worshippers of each; all tending to confirm the truth of what was asserted, ver. 5, "I know that the LORD is great, and that our LORD is above all gods." As the same words occur, Psal. cxv. 4. &c. the reader is referred thither for the explication of them.

19. *Bless the* LORD, *O house of Israel:*

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bless the LORD, *O house of Aaron*: 20. *Bless the* LORD, *O house of Levi*: *ye that fear the* LORD, *bless the* LORD. 21. *Blessed be the* LORD *out of Zion, which dwelleth at Jerusalem. Praise ye the* LORD.

He who proved himself superior to the objects of ancient idolatry, is no less superior to every object on which deluded man can place his affections. The Lord gave, and the Lord will take them away. Let "the house of Israel," therefore, and "the sons of Aaron," the church and the ministers thereof, let all who "fear the Lord," bless and praise his holy name in the temple here below, until they shall be admitted to do it for evermore, in that which is above.

TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM CXXXVI.

ARGUMENT.

THIS is a delightful hymn of praise and thanksgiving to Jehovah, 1—3, God of gods and Lord of lords, for the wonders, 4—9, of creation, 10—26, of providence and grace; which were probably celebrated in due order by one half of the choir, while the other half, or perhaps the whole in full chorus, took up the burden of each verse, "For his mercy endureth for ever!" a form of acknowledgment, as Bishop Patrick observes, prescribed, by David, 1 Chron. xvi. 41, to be used continually in the divine service; a form highly proper for creatures, and sinful creatures, to use, whose great employment it is now, and will be for ever, to magnify the mercy and loving kindness of their God.

1. *O give thanks unto the* LORD; *for* he is *good*: *for his mercy* endureth *for ever*. 2. *O give thanks unto the God of gods*: *for his mercy* endureth *for ever*. 3. *O give thanks to the Lord of lords*: *for his mercy* endureth *for ever*.

We are called upon to praise Jehovah, first, for his own essential attributes; then, for the exertion of those attributes in his works. The attributes here mentioned are those of "goodness" and "power;" the one renders him willing, the other able, to save: and what can we desire more, but that he should continue to be so? Of this likewise we are assured, by contemplating the unchangeableness of his nature. His disposition altereth not, and his kingdom none can take from him: "his mercy endureth for ever."

4. *To him who alone doeth great wonders*: *for his mercy* endureth *for ever*.

All the works of God are "wonderful," and speak him "alone" to have been their author. The established course of the world is, in reality, no less admirable, than are those extraordinary interpositions of omnipotence, whereby it hath been sometimes interrupted and suspended; though the latter, on account of their novelty, are apt to affect us more than the former doth, which is ever before our eyes, and therefore less regarded by us. How many of those, for whom the wonders of creation, providence, and redemption have been wrought, think none of them worthy their attention! Angels admire and adore, where man will not deign to cast an eye, or employ a thought.

5. *To him that by wisdom made the heavens*: *for his mercy* endureth *for ever*. 6. *To him that stretched out the earth above the waters*: *for his mercy* endureth *for ever*.

The heavens above, and the earth beneath, declare the wisdom of their great Maker, and proclaim aloud, to an intelligent ear, the divinity of the hand that formed them. The heavens display the love of God to man; the earth teaches the duty of man to God. Heaven is glorious and gracious, earth verdant and fruitful. The bright and ample circumference of heaven, the variegated surface of the earth, and the profusion of good things that distinguish the seasons, contaminated as they all have been by man's transgression, even now yield a prospect which annihilates all human grandeur. What idea, then, are we to frame of those new heavens and earth, from which sin and corruption are excluded, and where righteousness hath fixed her eternal throne?

7. *To him that made great lights*: *for his mercy* endureth *for ever*: 8. *The sun to rule by day*: *for his mercy* endureth *for ever*. 9. *The moon and stars to rule by night*: *for his mercy*. endureth *for ever*.

Light is the life and soul of the universe, the noblest emblem of the power and glory of God, who in the night season leaves not himself without witness, but gives us some portion of that light reflected, which by day we behold flowing from its great fountain in the heart of heaven. Thy church and thy saints, O Lord, "are the moon and the stars," which by the communication of doctrine, and the splendor of example, guide our feet, while we travel on in the night that hath overtaken us, waiting for the dawn of everlasting day. Then we shall behold thy glory, and see thee as thou art.

10. *To him that smote Egypt in their first-born*: *for his mercy* endureth *for ever*: 11. *And brought out Israel from among them*; *for his mercy* endureth *for ever*. 12. *With a strong hand, and with a stretched*

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out arm: for his mercy endureth *for ever.* 13. *To him which divided the Red Sea into parts: for his mercy* endureth *for ever.* 14. *And made Israel to pass through the midst of it: for his mercy* endureth *for ever.* 15. *But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea: for his mercy* endureth *for ever.* 16. *To him which led his people through the wilderness: for his mercy* endureth *for ever.* 17. *To him which smote great kings: for his mercy* endureth *for ever.* 18. *And slew famous kings: for his mercy* endureth *for ever.* 19. *Sihon king of the Amorites: for his mercy* endureth *for ever.* 20. *And Og the king of Bashan: for his mercy* endureth *for ever.* 21. *And gave their land for an heritage: for his mercy* endureth *for ever.* 22. Even *an heritage unto Israel his servant: for his mercy* endureth *for ever.* 23. *Who remembered us in our low estate: for his mercy* endureth *for ever.* 24. *And hath redeemed us from our enemies: for his mercy* endureth *for ever.*

From the works of creation, the Psalmist proceeds to those of providence and grace. He celebrates that mercy which rescued Israel from oppression, brought them out of the house of bondage, divided the sea to make a way for them, supported and conducted them through a waste, howling wilderness, crushed the might and power of those who opposed them, and at length settled them in the inheritance promised to their fathers. Eternal mercy hath in Christ Jesus realized all these figures, and accomplished the great redemption, thus foreshadowed of old. The Israel of God hath been rescued from the oppression of Satan, and brought out of the house of spiritual bondage. In the waters of baptism the old man of sin is buried, and we arise triumphant, to sing the praises of God our Saviour, who from thenceforth supports and conducts us in our passage through the world, strengthening us in the day of battle against every enemy that opposeth us, until we enter the heavenly Canaan, promised to the fathers of our faith, and dwell for ever in the possession of peace. When we consider how God has thus "remembered us in our low estate," and thus "redeemed us from our enemies," can we be weary of repeating, "For his mercy endureth for ever?"

25. *Who giveth food to all flesh: for his mercy* endureth *for ever.* 26. *O give thanks unto the God of heaven: for his mercy* endureth *for ever.*

The same bounty, which in the natural world, provideth proper nutriment for every creature, hath also provided for the spirits of all flesh the bread of eternal life. In either sense, Jehovah "openeth his hand, and filleth all things living with plenteousness." Be, therefore, his praise as universal and lasting as his mercy!

PSALM CXXXVII.

ARGUMENT.

THE Israelites, captives in Babylon, 1, 2, describe their woful estate; and 3, 4, the insults of their masters. 5, 6, They declare their inviolable affection for Jerusalem; 7, pray that God would remember the behavior of Edom; and, 8, 9, predict the destruction of Babylon. The Psalm admits of a beautiful and useful application to the state of Christians in this world, and their expected deliverance out of it.

1. *By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.*

What an inexpressible pathos is there in these few words! How do they at once transport us to Babylon, and place before our eyes the mournful situation of the Israelitish captives! Driven from their native country, stripped of every comfort and convenience, in a strange land, among idolaters, wearied and broken-hearted, they sit in silence by those hostile waters. Then the pleasant banks of Jordan present themselves to their imaginations; the towers of Salem rise to view; and the sad remembrance of much-loved Zion causes tears to run down their cheeks: "By the waters of Babylon we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion!" Besides the use which may be made of this Psalm by any church, when, literally, in a state of captivity, there is a sense in which it may be used by us all. For Zion is, in Scripture, the standing type of heaven, as Babylon is the grand figure of the world, the seat of confusion, the oppressor and persecutor of the people of God. In these, or the like terms, we may, therefore, suppose a sinner to bemoan himself upon the earth—O Lord, I am an Israelite, exiled by my sins from thy holy city, and left to mourn in this Babylon, the land of my captivity. Here I dwell in sorrow, by these transient waters, musing on the restless and unstable nature of earthly pleasures, which pass swiftly by me, and are soon gone for ever. Yet for these, alas! I have exchanged the permanent joys of Zion, and parted with the felicity of thy chosen. Wherefore my heart is pained within me, and the remembrance of my folly will not let me rest night or day. O Zion, thou holy and beautiful city, the temple of the Lamb, the habitation of the blessed, the seat of delight, the land of the

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living, when shall I behold thee? When shall I enter thy gates with thanksgiving, and thy courts with praise? The hope of a return to thee is my only comfort in this vale of tears, where I am and will be a mourner, till my captivity be brought back, and my sorrow be turned into joy.

2. *We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.*

The additional circumstance, which the divine painter hath here thrown into his piece, is, to the last degree, just and striking. It was not enough to represent the Hebrew captives weeping, on the banks of the Euphrates, at the remembrance of Zion, but, upon looking up, we behold their harps unstrung, and pendent on the willows that grew there. The sincere penitent, like them, hath bidden adieu to mirth; his soul refuseth to be comforted with the comforts of Babylon; nor can he sing any more, till pardon and restoration shall have enabled him to sing, in the temple, a song of praise and thanksgiving.

3. *For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us* required of us *mirth*, saying, *Sing us one of the songs of Zion.* 4. *How shall we sing the* LORD'S *song in a strange land?**

The Babylonians are introduced as insulting over the Israelites, and scoffing at their faith and worship, not without a tacit reflection on their God, who could not protect his favored people against their enemies. "Now sing us one of your songs of Zion; now let us hear you sound the praises of that God, of whom ye boasted, that he dwelt among you in the temple which we have laid waste, and burnt with fire." Thus the faithful have been, and thus they will be, insulted by infidels in the day of their calamity. And "how," indeed, "can they sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" How can they tune their voices to festive and eucharistic strains, when God, by punishing them for their sins, calleth to mourning and weeping? But then, Israel in Babylon foresaw a day of redemption; and so doth the church in the world; a day when she shall triumph, and her enemies shall lick the dust. No circumstances, therefore, should make us forget her, and the promises concerning her.

5. *If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget* her cunning. 6. *If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.*

The whole nation may be supposed in these words to declare, as one man, that neither the afflictions nor the allurements of Babylon should efface from their minds the remembrance of Jerusalem, or prevent their looking forward to her future glorious restoration. If any temptation should induce them to employ their tongues and their hands in the service of Babel rather than in that of Zion, they wish to lose the use of the former and the skill of the latter. The thoughts and affections of true penitents, both in prosperity and adversity, are fixed upon their heavenly country and city; they had rather be deprived of their powers and faculties, than of the will to use them aright; and the hope of glory, hereafter to be revealed in the church, is the flower and crown of their joy.

7. *Remember, O* LORD, *the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Raze* it, *raze* it, even *to the foundations thereof.*

The people of God beseech him to take their cause in hand, and to avenge them on their adversaries, particularly on the Edomites, who, though their brethren according to the flesh, being descended from Esau, the brother of Jacob, yet in the day of Jerusalem's affliction, when the Chaldeans came against it, were aiding and encouraging those pagans to destroy it utterly. Edom is charged with this unnatural behavior, and threatened for it, by God himself, in the prophecy of Obadiah, ver. 10. &c. "For thy violence against thy brother Jacob, shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever. In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them. But thou shouldest not have looked on the day of thy brother in the day that he became a stranger: neither shouldest thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction —For the day of the LORD is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee, thy reward shall return upon thine own head—but upon Mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness, and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions." It may be observed, that the Jews afterwards acted the same part towards the Christian church, which the Edomites

* Many singers were carried captives: Ezra, ii. 41. These would of course take their instruments with them, and be insulted, as here. Their songs were sacred, and unfit to be sung before idolaters. But the words, "How shall we sing," &c. are not an answer given to them, but the free utterance afterwards of the feelings of the Jews among themselves. ANONYMOUS NOTES IN MERRICK'S ANNOTATIONS.

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had acted toward them, encouraging and stirring up the Gentiles to persecute and destroy it from off the face of the earth. And God "remembered" them for the Christians' sakes, as they prayed him to "remember Edom" for their sakes. Learn we hence, what a crime it is for Christians to assist the common enemy, or call in the common enemy to assist them, against their brethren.

8. *O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy* shall he be, *that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us.* 9. *Happy* shall he be, *that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.*

The subject of these two verses is the same with that of many chapters in Isaiah and Jeremiah, namely, the vengeance of heaven executed upon Babylon by Cyrus, raised up to be king of the Medes and Persians, united under him for that purpose. The meaning of the words, "happy shall he be," is, He shall go on and prosper, for the Lord of hosts shall go with him, and fight his battles against the enemy and oppressor of his people, empowering him to recompense upon the Chaldeans the works of their hands, and to reward them as they served Israel. The slaughter of the very infants, mentioned in the last verse, is expressly predicted by Isaiah, ch. xiii. 16. "Their children also shall be dashed to peices before their eyes; their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished." The destruction was to be universal, sparing neither sex nor age. Terrible, but just, are thy judgments, O Lord! The fall of the mystical "Babylon" is described, Rev. xviii. in terms and phrases, borrowed from this and other prophecies relating primarily to the ancient city called by that name. Whoever will carefully read over the chapter referred to, with the three subsequent ones concerning the triumph of Messiah, and the glory of the new Jerusalem, will be able to form proper ideas of the world and the church, and will know where to choose his portion.

PSALM CXXXVIII.

ARGUMENT.

THIS Psalm containeth, 1—3, a resolution to praise God for a deliverance vouchsafed; 4, 5, a prophecy that the kings of the earth should glorify Jehovah for his mercy, shown, 6, in exalting the humble, and abasing the proud; 7, 8, an act of faith and confidence in God.

1. *I will praise thee with my whole heart: before the gods will I sing praise unto thee.* 2. *I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name, for thy loving kindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name;* or, *thou hast magnified thy name,* even *thy word, above all.*

In these verses we evidently hear the voice of one whom God had delivered from a state of great affliction and danger, and who therefore determines to make the due acknowledgments in public; to give thanks "before the gods," that is, before "kings" and "rulers" in the great congregation; to "worship in the temple," and there to set forth the "loving kindness" and "truth" of Jehovah, in having accomplished the promised salvation, and thereby "magnified" his holy "name" and his faithful "word" over every thing that opposeth itself against it. The Christian church cannot find stronger and more emphatical terms, in which to express her sense of the greatest of all mercies, the redemption of the world by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, and his exaltation "above every name that is named in heaven and earth."

3. *In the day when I cried, thou answeredst me,* and *strengthenedst me* with *strength in my soul.* 4. *All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O* LORD, *when they hear the words of thy mouth.* 5. *Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the* LORD: *for great is the glory of the* LORD.

From this part of the Psalm it appears to be a prophetical one. The deliverance which it celebrates is of such a nature, that when the glad tidings of it should be published to the world, we are told, it should induce the nations, with their princes, to adore Jehovah, to walk in his ways, and to chant forth his praises. The call of the Gentiles to the Gospel is here foretold in words which cannot be mistaken; and the redemption of the church, in Christ her head, is spoken of as the subject of thanksgiving among the kings of the earth. "In the day when I cried, thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul." For this reason, "All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O Lord," &c.

6. *Though the* LORD be *high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off.*

Humility is the way to salvation and glory. It is said of our blessed Lord, that "because he humbled himself, therefore God highly exalted him:" and the great potentates of the world must tread in his steps, if they would be exalted with him. As to the proud, God "knoweth" and he detesteth them; he beholdeth and keepeth them at a "distance."

7. *Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me: thou shalt stretch forth*

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thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me.

Who doth not "walk in the midst of trouble," while his pilgrimage is prolonged upon the earth? Who hath not "enemies" encompassing him on every side? O how comfortable, then, the reflection that he is with us, who can "revive" the dead; that we are under the protection of an "arm" which is almighty! Yes, blessed Lord, we believe that this saying of thy holy Psalmist will be verified to every child of thine, even as it was to him, and to thy Son Jesus, in whose person he might speak it, as a prophet. Great indeed were the "troubles," in the midst of which the true David "walked" up and down amongst us. He carried all our sorrows, because he bare all our sins. "Yet didst thou revive him;" thou didst raise him from the dead, and exalt him to thy throne in heaven, where he ever liveth to make intercession for us, that we, who, in the days of our flesh, do also "walk in the midst of trouble," may be revived by thy Spirit, the giver of life and holiness.

8. *The* LORD *will perfect* that which *concerneth me: thy mercy, O* LORD, endureth *for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands.*

In troublous times, and the days of affliction, we must look back on that which God hath already done for us, and from thence draw an argument, that he will "perfect" that which remains, and not leave his work unfinished: we must remember, that his mercies fail not after a time, but "endure for ever" the same; and when we call to mind that we are "the work of his own hands," how can we think he will "forsake us" unless we utterly and finally forsake him?

TWENTY-NINTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM CXXXIX.

ARGUMENT.

IT seems evident, from the latter part of this noble and instructive Psalm, that the author penned it, at a time when he was persecuted and calumniated, as an appeal to the all-seeing Judge between him and his adversaries. He takes the opportunity of expatiating in the sublimest manner, 1—12 on the omnipresence and omniscience of him who, 13—16, formeth man in the womb by his power, and, 17, preserveth him through life by his providence. He then, 19, 20, expresseth his confidence that God, as knowing all things, would deliver him from his enemies; 21, 22, he declareth his zeal and fidelity in the service of his divine Master, by whom, 23, 24, he petitioneth to be proved, purified, and perfected in the way of holiness.

1. *O* LORD, *thou hast searched me, and known* me. 2. *Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine up-rising: thou understandest my thought afar off.* 3. *Thou compassest my path, and my lying down, and art acquainted* with *all my ways.* 4. *For* there is *not a word in my tongue,* but, *lo, O* LORD, *thou knowest it altogether,* or, *When there is not a word in my tongue, lo, O* LORD, &c. 5. *Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.* 6. Such *knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot* attain *unto it.*

The Psalmist employeth a beautiful variety of expressions to denote his faith in the omnipresence and omniscience of Jehovah, to whom, in the latter part of the Psalm, he appealeth, as the proper judge between him and his implacable enemies. He describeth his God as having that complete knowledge of him and his affairs, which, among men, the most accurate "search" and the strictest scrutiny, could not obtain; as being thoroughly "acquainted with all his ways" or proceedings, nay, with his very "thoughts," while yet existing only in embryo, in his own mind; as watching and observing him at all seasons, during the actions of the day, and his repose at night; and, in short, as having so "beset" him on all sides, and "laid his hand upon him," that he could not move without his knowledge and consent. When we reflect that "all things are thus naked and open to him with whom we have to do;" that, although he dwelleth in the highest heavens, he surveyeth not only the outward acts, but the very hearts and imaginations of men upon earth—must we not each of us cry out, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it;" I cannot admire it enough, for I cannot conceive of it aright!—"The actual, constant consideration of God's presence would be the readiest way in the world to make sin to cease from among the children of men, and for men to approach to the blessed estate of the saints in heaven, who cannot sin, for they always walk in the presence, and behold the face of God." See Bishop Taylor's "Holy Living," chap. i. sect. 3.

7. *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?* 8. *If I ascend up into heaven, thou* art *there: If I make my bed in hell,* or *the grave, behold thou* art there. 9. If *I take the wings of the morning,* and *dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea:* 10. *Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.*

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11. *If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me.* 12. *Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light* are *both alike* to thee.

We can never sin with security, but in a place where the eye of God cannot behold us. And where is that place? Had we a mind to escape his inspection, "whither should we go?" Heaven is the seat of his glory, creation the scene of his providence, and the grave itself will be the theatre of his power; so that our efforts will be equally vain, whether we ascend, or descend, or fly abroad upon the wings of the morning light, which diffuseth itself with such velocity over the globe from east to west. The arm of the Almighty will still at pleasure prevent, and be ready to arrest, the fugitives in their progress. Darkness may, indeed, conceal us and our deeds from the sight of men; but the divine presence, like that of the sun, turns night into day, and makes all things manifest before God. The same consideration which should restrain us from sin, should also encourage us to work righteousness, and comfort us under all our sorrows; namely, the thought, that we are never out of the sight and protection of our Maker. The piety and the charity which are practised in cottages; the labor and the pain which are patiently endured in the field, and on the bed of sickness; the misery and torment inflicted by persecution in the mines, the galleys, and the dungeons; all are under the inspection of Jehovah, and are noted down by him against the day of recompense. He sees, and he will reward all we do and all we suffer,- as becometh Christians. He who, for our sakes, caused his Son to descend from heaven to the lower parts of the earth, and from thence to ascend to heaven again, will watch over, preserve, and re-assemble the parts of our bodies, though dissolved in the grave, buried in the ocean, or dispersed to the four winds. So that, with allusion to this event also, a dying servant of God may exclaim, Whither can I go from thy Spirit? Or whither can I flee from thy presence? If, as to my spiritual part, I ascend into heaven, thou art there to receive me; if, as touching my body, I make my bed in שאול, or the grave, behold thou art there, to secure me. If I take the wings of the wind, or those yet more expeditious ones of the morning, and am carried by them to dwell in the midst of the sea, instead of the bowels of the earth, still shall I be under thy power and providence; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me fast, preserving me for a joyful resurrection at the time appointed.

13. *For thou hast possessed*, or, *formed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.* 14. *I will praise thee; for I am fearfully* and *wonderfully made: marvellous* are *thy works; and* that *my soul knoweth right well.*

That God seeth in darkness, and that from him nothing is hidden, his knowledge of, and power over, our most inward parts, do plainly show. He "formed," and he therefore "possesseth," as his own property, our "reins," and is consequently privy to all those affections and desires which flow from thence. It was he who "covered" us in the womb, or, as it is elsewhere expressed, Job. x. 11, who "clothed us with skin and flesh, and fenced us with bones and sinews;" a work so astonishing, that before the Psalmist proceeds in his description of it, he cannot help breaking forth in rapture at the thought: "I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made!"

"Obstupeo, et memet læta formidine lustro,
"Divini monumentum operis!"—— LOWTH.

With awful joy I view this frame of mine,
Stupendous monument of pow'r divine!

15. *My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret*, and *curiously wrought*, or *variegated like needle-work, in the lowest parts of the earth.* 16. *Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all* my members *were written*, which *in continuance were fashioned, when* as yet there was *none of them.*

By the "lower parts of the earth" is undoubtedly to be understood the "womb," where the fœtus is gradually formed and matured for the birth, like plants and flowers under ground. The process is compared to that in a piece of work wrought with a needle, or fashioned in the loom; which, with all its beautiful variety of color, and proportion of figure, ariseth by degrees to perfection under the hand of the artist, framed according to a pattern lying before him, from a rude mass of silk, or other materials. Thus, by the wisdom and power of God, and after a plan delineated in his book, is a shapeless wrought up into the most curious texture of nerves, veins, arteries, bones, muscles, membranes, and skin, most skilfully interwoven and connected with each other, until it becometh a body, harmoniously diversified with all the limbs and lineaments of a man, not one of which at first appeared, any more than the figures were to be seen in the ball of silk. But then (which is the chief thing here insisted on by the Psalmist,) whereas the human arti-

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ficer must have the clearest light whereby to accomplish his task, the divine Workmaster seeth in secret, and effecteth all his wonders within the dark and narrow confines of the womb. The reformation of our corrupted and dissolved bodies, which is to be wrought, at the last day, in the womb of the earth, in order to their new birth, will crown all the works of the Almighty.

17. *How precious also are thy thoughts unto*, or, *concerning me, O God! how great is the sum of them!* 18. *If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.*

From the wonders of God's forming hand, the Psalmist proceeds to those of his all-directing providence, which afford additional proofs of the divine omniscience and omnipresence. The "thoughts" and counsels of Jehovah concerning David, his appointment to the throne, his troubles and his preservation in the midst of them, were "precious" and delightful subjects of meditation and praise, never to be exhausted of the rich matter they contained. With these in his mind he lay down at night to rest, and "when he awoke" in the morning, his thoughts naturally recurred to the pleasing theme; he began where he had left off, and found himself, in heart and soul, "still present with God," still ruminating on him and his works. The mercies of heaven in the redemption of the church, by the sufferings and exaltation of the true David, according to the divine decree concerning him —how precious are they to believers! How great is the sum, how far exceeding all human arithmetic to number them! Let them be to us the constant subjects of contemplation, admiration, and thanksgiving, day and night; and let death, that last sleep, find us engaged in an employment, which, when we awake and arise from the grave, we shall resume, and prosecute to eternity in the presence of God.

19. *Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God*: or, *Wilt thou not slay the wicked, O God? depart from me, therefore, ye blood-thirsty men.* 20. *For they speak against thee wickedly*, and *thine enemies take* thy name *in vain.*

David now draws the intended conclusion from the premises, so largely expatiated upon in the former part of the Psalm. As if he had said—And wilt thou not, O God, thou who art every where present, seeing and knowing all things: thou to whom the justice of my cause, and the iniquity of mine adversaries, are equally open; thou who hast formed, and hitherto, in so wonderful a manner, watched over and preserved thy servant; "wilt thou not slay the wicked," and deliver me, as thou hast promised to do, out of their hands? I know thou wilt; "depart from me, therefore, ye blood-thirsty men;" I trust in my God, and will have no connection, in the way of treaty or friendship, with you. You are not my enemies, but those of Jehovah; against whom, not considering that he is privy to all your words, and even to your thoughts, you "speak" presumptuously and "wickedly," and whose "name" you "take in vain," no less when you do evil under a godly pretence, and call him to witness the truth of your lies and calumnies, than when you openly blaspheme him. Such seemeth to be the full import of these two verses; and their application to the members or the church, when at any time in similar circumstances, is obvious.

21. *Do not I hate them, O* LORD, *that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee?* 22. *I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies.*

A faithful servant hath the same interests, the same friends, the same enemies, with his Master, whose cause and honor he is, upon all occasions, in duty bound to support and maintain. A good man hates, as God himself doth; he hates not the persons of men, but their sins; not what God made them, but what they have made themselves. We are neither to hate the men, on account of the vices they practice; nor to love the vices, for the sake of the men who practice them. He who observeth invariably this distinction, fulfilleth the perfect law of charity, and hath the love of God and of his neighbor abiding in him.

23. *Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:* 24. *And see if* there be any *wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

In the first verse of the Psalm, David declared, that Jehovah had "searched him out, and known him;" he concludes with a petition, that his proceedings, and even his thoughts, might be still scrutinized by his Maker, in order to their perfect purification from any evil which might be in them, or adhere to them. Should the hottest furnace of adversity be found necessary to purge the dross from the silver, he refuseth not to be dissolved in it, and new formed, so that he might only become a vessel of honor, fitted for the Master's use here below, and vouchsafed a place afterwards in his temple above. "See if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!"

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PSALM CXL.

ARGUMENT.

THIS Psalm containeth, 1—8, a prayer for deliverance from persecutors and calumniators, their violence and their wiles; 9—11, a prophecy of their final destruction, and, 12, 13, the salvation of the afflicted righteous. It was composed by David in his troubles, and is applicable to Christ and to the church, respectively, in theirs.

1. *Deliver me, O* LORD, *from the evil man: preserve me from the violent man;* 2. *Which imagine mischiefs in* their *heart; continually are they gathered together* for war.

"Evil and violent men" exist in all ages, to harass and oppress the servants of God; their thoughts are employed in "imagining mischief" against such, and their hands are ready at all times for the "war." Had we no enemies without, there are those within, who are ever fighting and troubling us. We cannot put off our Christian armor for a moment in this world, nor enter into peace and rest, but by a happy death and a joyful resurrection. Then God will "deliver" us, as he delivered David, and our blessed Lord and Master, the Son of David, from their respective enemies.

3. *They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adders' poison* is *under their lips.*

Slander and calumny must always precede and accompany persecution, because malice itself cannot excite people against a good man, as such; to do this, he must first be represented as a bad man. What can be said of those who are busied in this manner, but that they are a "generation of vipers," the brood of the old "serpent," that grand accuser and calumniator of the brethren, having under their tongues a bag of "poison," conveying instant death to the reputation on which they fasten. Thus David was hunted as a rebel, Christ was crucified as a blasphemer, and the primitive Christians were tortured as guilty of incest and murder.

4. *Keep me, O* LORD, *from the hands of the wicked; preserve me from the violent men, who have purposed to overthrow my goings.* 5. *The proud have hid a snare for me, and cords; they have spread a net by the way side; they have set gins for me.*

David here describeth the subtilty and industry employed by his enemies to effect his destruction, by lying in wait for him, as a skilful fowler doth for his game, so that they thought it impossible he should escape their hands. Such was the conduct of the Jews, with regard to the Son of David. And, O how refined the policy, how unwearied the application of our spiritual adversaries, to "overthrow our goings" in the path of life and salvation, to circumvent, and to destroy us for ever! How are "the snares, the nets, and the gins," placed for us, by that cunning and experienced artist, who takes care that nothing should appear in view, but the alluring baits of honor, pleasure, and profit, while of the toils we have no notice, till we find ourselves entangled and caught in them! Who shall preserve us thus walking in the midst of dangers? He to whom David, in the following verses, preferreth his prayer, and teacheth us to do likewise.

6. *I said unto the* LORD, *Thou* art *my God: hear the voice of my supplications, O* LORD. 7. *O God the* LORD, *the strength of my salvation, thou hast covered my head in the day of battle.* 8. *Grant not, O* LORD, *the desires of the wicked: further not his wicked device; lest they exalt themselves.*

Jehovah, the God of David, is also our God, and he is always ready to hear our supplications. He is our strength, and hath often covered our head with the helmet of salvation, in the day of battle and open war with our spiritual enemies. Nor will he, for the glory of his name, grant their desires, or permit their more secret "devices" and machinations to work the destruction of his people; lest they exalt themselves, as having frustrated his counsels for the redemption of his servants.

9. As for *the head of those that compass me about, the mischief of their own lips shall cover them.* 10. *Burning coals shall fall upon them; they shall be cast into the fire, into deep pits, that they rise not up again.* 11. *An evil speaker shall not be established in the earth; evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow* him.

The prophet, in these three verses, predicted those just judgments which heaven will inflict on the slanderers and persecutors of the righteous. Their lips, which uttered mischief against others, shall be the means of covering themselves with confusion, when out of their own mouths they shall be judged. Those tongues, which have contributed to set the world on fire, shall be tormented with the hot burning coals of eternal vengeance: and they who, with so much eagerness and diligence, have prepared pits for the destruction of their brethren, shall be cast into a deep and bottomless pit, out of which they will not rise up again any more for ever. Evil speakers and false accusers shall gain no lasting establishment, but punishment shall hunt

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sin through all its doubles, and seize it at last as its legal prey. Let these great truths be firmly rooted in our hearts, and they will keep us steady in the worst of times.

12. *I know that the* LORD *will maintain the cause of the afflicted*, and *the right of the poor.* 13. *Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name: the upright shall dwell in thy presence.*

That unjust and oppressive men shall, in the end, suffer proportionably to their deserts, we are assured from this consideration, namely, that the Almighty is the patron of the injured and oppressed. He will plead the cause of the meek and lowly, who are used by the world as their blessed Master was used before them. A day will come, when, delivered out of all their troubles, they shall "give thanks unto thy name," O Lord, and "dwell in thy presence" for evermore.

PSALM CXLI.

ARGUMENT.

DAVID seems to have composed this Psalm just before his flight to Achish king of Gath; when he had a second time spared Saul's life, but could trust him no longer: See 1 Sam. xxvi. and xxvii. 1, 2, He prayeth earnestly for help, and entreateth to be heard as when able to attend the service of the tabernacle; 3—5, he petitioneth to be preserved from the snares of idolatry, in the country whither he was going; 6, 7, he relateth his own conduct toward Saul, and that of Saul toward him; 8, 9, he professeth his faith in Jehovah, and redoubleth his prayer to him; 10, he predicteth the destruction of his enemies, and his own deliverance. Many parts of the exposition of this Psalm, given by the late learned Mr. Peters, in his "Critical Dissertation on the Book of Job," have been adopted in the ensuing comment.

1. LORD, *I will cry unto thee, make haste unto me; give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee.* 2. *Let my prayer be set forth before thee* as *incense;* and *the lifting up of my hands* as *the evening sacrifice.*

The earnest and repeated supplication for help, in the first of these two verses, sufficiently declares the Psalmist to have been, at the time, in a situation of the utmost distress. And the second verse as plainly showeth, that he was then at a distance from the tabernacle, where all the solemn prayers of the Israelites, together with their daily sacrifices, were offered up. And, therefore, with his face probably, directed thither, like Danie in Babylon, praying towards Jerusalem, he begs that God would accept of all which it was in his power to perform, namely, the devotion of his heart, and the elevation of his hands in prayer; that the one might ascend to heaven, fragrant and well pleasing, as the cloud of "incense" mounting from the holy altar, and the other, in conjunction with it, prevail instead of the "evening oblation," for the deliverance of himself and his companions.

3. *Set a watch, O* LORD, *before my mouth, keep the door of my lips;* or, *a guard over the door of my lips.* 4. *Incline not mine heart*, i. e. *suffer not my heart to be inclined, to* any *evil thing, to practice wicked works with men that work iniquity*, or, *idolatry; and let me not eat of their dainties.*

David was now going to seek a retreat from the persecutions of his master Saul amidst a race of idolaters, who would be curious to observe all his words and actions, and would attempt to draw him in to be a partaker with them in their idol worship, or to suspect him as a spy and an enemy, if he refused to comply with them. He therefore beseeches God to "set a watch before his mouth, a guard over the door of his lips," that he might neither endanger his own safety by his imprudent carriage, nor violate his religion by any weak compliances. He entreats to be preserved from that greatest of all evils, the renouncing Jehovah to follow vain and strange gods. He desires that he might not be guilty of this heinous and presumptuous sin, no, not so much as in thought—"Suffer not mine heart to be inclined to any evil thing;" that he might abhor to play the hypocrite, by joining in the abominations of the heathen, "the men that work idolatry," though but in show and appearance only; and that he might never be allured by the pomp and pleasure of their feasts, by their luxurious meats, and lascivious rites, to mix in their religious festivals, to eat and drink, and rise up to play—"neither let me eat of THEIR dainties." A Christian, living among unbelievers and sensualists in the world, hath abundant reason to put up the same prayers, and to use the same precautions.

5. *Let the righteous smite me;* it shall be *a kindness: and let him reprove me;* it shall be *an excellent oil*, which *shall not break*, or, *depress, my head: for yet my prayer also* shall be *in their calamities*, or, *against their wickedness.*

David continueth his prayer, and beggeth of heaven, as one of its best and choicest blessings, that if at any time, through the frailty of nature, he should be inclined to yield to the above-mentioned temptations, he might find, among his attendants, some "righteous" and faithful friend, who might,

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with a kind severity, check and "reprove" him. Such reproof, he says, would, at that season, be to him as שמן ראש, the "chief," or most precious and "excellent oil;" see Exod. xxx. 23, it would not "depress his head," אל יגי ראשי, or cause him to "hang it down," as people in sorrow do, but it would be "the oil of gladness," refreshing, enlivening, strengthening, and enabling him to lift up his head above the temptation against which he had been praying, and, with renewed vigor, would still continue to pray; "for yet my prayer" shall be כרעותיהם, "against their wickednesses." The blessed effects of reproof, when given and taken as it ought to be, never, surely, were more exactly or more beautifully described.

6. *When their judges are overthrown in stony places, they shall hear my words; for they are sweet.*

Of this verse, as it stands in our translation, I know not what can be made. When literally rendered from the Hebrew, it runs thus—"Their judges have been dismissed in the sides of the rock, and have heard my words that they were sweet." David, reflecting on Saul's cruelty in driving him out of his country, to wander mongst aliens and idolaters, very naturally calls to mind, and mentions, his own different behavior towards that implacable enemy, whose life he had spared at two several times, when he had it in his power to destroy him as he pleased. "Their judges," or princes, leaders, generals, &c. according to the frequent usage of the word in Scripture, נשמטו, "have been dismissed" (the common signification of the verb שמט) "in the sides of the rock," when I had them at an advantage there; 1 Sam. xxiv. 3, "and have heard my words, that they were sweet;"* they only heard me expostulate with them in a manner so mild and humble, that even Saul himself was overcome, and "lift up his voice and wept, saying, My son David, thou art more righteous than I—The Lord reward thee good for that thou hast done unto me this day:" 1 Sam. xxiv. 16. Such hath been my conduct towards the servants of Saul. Yet how have my people, alas! been by them most miserably butchered!

7. *Our bones are scattered at the grave's mouth, as when one cutteth and cleaveth* wood *upon the earth.*

This probably alludes to the bloody massacre of Ahimelech and the priests that were in Nob, who, to the number of eighty-five persons, all of a sacred character, and all innocent, were inhumanly slaughtered together by Doeg the Edomite. Such havoc as this might well be compared to the cutting and cleaving of wood, like the fragments of which the bones of the sufferers lay scattered here and there upon the ground, as many of the bodies might be devoured, before pits were prepared, near the field of slaughter, for their interment. To feel the force of the Psalmist's expressions in this verse, we need not have recourse to such extraordinary scenes of tyranny and cruelty. The daily dissolution and destruction of our bodies, in the common way, will be found abundantly sufficient for the purpose. For who can attend the digging of a grave, and thus view the ruins then disclosed, without exclaiming, "Our bones lie scattered at the grave's mouth; as when one cutteth and cleaveth wood upon the earth?" Indeed, Rachel hath often had occasion to bemoan her children, thus untimely slain by the unrelenting sword of persecution. But let her refrain her voice from weeping, and her eyes from tears. Her children shall return again from the dead, and their bones shall rejoice and flourish as an herb. Jer. xxxi. 15. Isa. lxvi. 14.

8. *But mine eyes* are *unto thee, O* GOD *the* LORD: *in thee is my trust; leave not my soul destitute.* 9. *Keep me from the snares* which *they have laid for me, and the gins of the workers of iniquities.*

The principle upon which David acted, and supported himself under his troubles, was a firm trust in God, and a steady resolution to obey him. With confidence, therefore, he made his prayer, that Jehovah would keep him from the snares which Saul and his counsellors had laid for him on one hand, and from those of the idolaters, among whom he was driven, on the other; that so he might not be left destitute and lose his life, or, which he prized more, his faith. For it is remarkable, that in his last speech to Saul, 1 Sam. xxvi. 19, where he mentions the wicked policy of his enemies, who had contrived to force him into banishment, he mentions not the danger of his life, but only that of his religion—"They have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the LORD, saying, Go serve other gods;" intimating, that they had done what lay in their power to drive him to idolatry, by forcing him into a country where he would have the strongest temptation to it.

10. *Let the wicked*, or, *the wicked shall, fall into their own nets together, whilst that I withal escape.*

From the sequel of the history we find that the hope and assurance here expressed by the Psalmist were not vain. He escaped all the snares that were laid for him on every

* This is Mr. PETER's interpretation of the verse, and Dr. DURELL hath fallen upon the same.

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side; he lived to see he death of Saul, who fell in a battle with the Philistines, and those Philistines subdued by himself and his subjects. So will the devices of all our enemies be in the end turned against themselves: they shall fall and perish, but we shall triumph, with our Redeemer, to eternity.

TWENTY-NINTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM CXLII.

ARGUMENT.

THE title of this Psalm informs us, that it was a prayer of David, when he was in the cave, that is, most probably, the cave of Adullam, whither he fled when in danger both from Saul and from the Philistines: 1 Sam. xxii. 1. It containeth, 1, 2, a supplication; 3—5, an act of confidence in God at that season of danger and destitution; 6, a tender complaint of his sufferings, and, 7, a petition for deliverance. Our translators having rendered some of the verbs in the past tense, the liberty hath been taken to alter them, agreeably to the Hebrew and to the tenor of the Psalm, which seemeth to be an actual prayer, and not the relation of one.

1. *I will cry unto the* LORD *with my voice; with my voice unto the* LORD *will I make my supplication.* 2. *I will pour out my complaint before him; I will show before him my trouble.*

The state of David in the cave of Adullam was a state of utter destitution. Persecuted by his own countrymen, dismissed by Achish, and not yet joined by his own relations, or any other attendants, he took refuge in the the cave, and was there alone. But in that disconsolate, and seemingly desperate situation, he desponded not. He had a friend in heaven, into whose bosom he "poured forth his complaint," and told him the sad story of his trouble and distress. When danger besetteth us around, and fear is on every side, let us follow the example of David, and that, of a greater than David, who, when Jews and Gentiles conspired against him, and he was left all alone, in the garden, and on the cross, gave himself unto prayer.

3. *When my spirit is overwhelmed within me, then thou knowest my path. In the way wherein I walk, have they privily laid a snare for me.*

The meaning is, Though my thoughts are so broken and confused, that I am not able to counsel and direct myself in these straits, yet thou knowest the path wherein I walk, thou art with me, and wilt preserve me from those who watch all my steps, and lie in ambush for me. Such should be at all times the confidence of believers in the wisdom, the power and the goodness of God, even when human prudence has done its utmost, and is at its wit's end.

4. *Look on* my *right hand, and see that* there is *no man that will know me: refuge faileth me; no man careth for my soul.* 5. *I cry unto thee, O* LORD: *I say, Thou* art *my refuge,* and *my portion in the land of the living.*

David beseech God to consider his destitute condition, to "look on his right hand," the place where the advocate used to stand, and to "see that there was no man that would know," acknowledge him, and take his part; "refuge failed him;" there was on earth no patron to whom he could commit himself and his cause; no one, דורש, that would "seek, require, or avenge his soul." Thus Dr. Hammond expounds the words in a forensic sense. How affectingly do they describe the destitution of David in the cave, and that of the Son of David in the day of his passion, death, and burial! Death will, in like manner, strip us of all our earthly connections and dependences. But even at that hour, may we, each of us, "cry unto thee, O Lord, and say, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living!"

6. *Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low; deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I.* 7. *Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name; the righteous shall compass me about; for,* or, *when, thou shalt deal bountifully with me.*

This prayer of David was heard and answered; he was delivered from his persecutors, enlarged from his distress, exalted to the throne, and joined by all the tribes of Israel. The true David was delivered from his stronger persecutors, brought from the sepulchre, exalted to his heavenly throne, owned and submitted to by the converted nations, who became the Israel and people of God. Nor let us fear, though we be brought very low, and our persecutors, the world, the flesh, and the devil, be at at any time too strong for us. God will deliver us from the bondage of sin, and redeem us from the prison of the grave, to join the great assembly before the throne, and there to praise his name for ever.

PSALM CXLIII.

ARGUMENT.

THIS is the seventh and last of the Penitential Psalms; and as we are not informed of any particular temporal calamities, which gave occasion to its being composed, we shall

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explain it according to the general use now made of it in the church, for which, indeed, it seems lo have been originally and entirely designed. After the example of David, the penitent, 1, maketh his prayer to God for pardon; 2, acknowledgeth the impossibility of any man being saved but by grace; 3, 4, deploreth the lamentable effects of sin; 5, comforteth himself with a retrospect of God's mercies of old; and, 6—12, prayeth, in a variety of expressions, for remission of sin, sanctification and redemption.

1. *Hear my prayer, O* LORD, *give ear to my supplications: in thy faithfulness answer me,* and *in thy righteousness.*

When Mary Magdalene washed the feet of Christ with her tears, he knew what the petition was which her soul desired to have granted, and answered it accordingly, before it was made in words, by saying, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." Thus the penitent, without mentioning the subject of his request, as being well known to God, begs that his "prayer and supplication may be heard and answered," agreeably to the "faithfulness and righteousness of Jehovah."

2. *And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.*

In the first verse, the suppliant appealed to the promises of God, and his fidelity in performing them. Here he urgeth the fallen, sinful, wretched state of human nature, which hath rendered it absolutely impossible that any son of Adam can be saved, should God "enter into judgment with him," and exact the punishment due to his offences according to the LAW, instead of pardoning them by an act of GRACE. The thoughts of such a trial are enough to appal the soul of the best man living, to make his flesh tremble, and all his bones shake, as if he stood at the foot of Sinai, and beheld Jehovah ready to break forth upon him in the flame of devouring fire.

3. *For the enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath smitten my life down to the ground; he hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead.* 4. *Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is desolate.*

We have an "enemy" who "persecutes" us with unrelenting malice; he "smites our life down to the ground," as often as we yield to temptation, and fall from our state of holiness, to grovel in base and earthly desires; he "makes us to dwell in darkness," when he has thus withdrawn us from the light of heaven, which before illuminated us, while we walked in it; the spiritual life, for a time, is extinguished, and we become, for all the purposes of faith and charity, "like those that have been long dead. Therefore," at the consideration of this our sad estate, when God has enabled us to see and know it, our "spirit is overwhelmed within us," with remorse, anxiety, and despondency; and "our heart within us," deprived of the comforts of conscience, the joys of the Spirit, and the presence of the Beloved, "is desolate," forlorn, miserable. To rescue the sinner from this disconsolate and lost condition, our blessed Saviour was forsaken on the cross; "his spirit was overwhelmed within him, and his heart within him was desolate; the enemy" was suffered to "smite his" precious "life down to the ground, and he "dwelt," for three days, "in darkness, as the men that have been long dead."

5. *I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands.*

When sin has thus laid us low, and, as it were, slain and entombed us, we begin to revive and to arise from the dead, through hope of forgiveness and restoration to the divine favor, by "remembering the days of old, and meditating on all the works" of love and mercy, which Jehovah then wrought towards those who were sinners like ourselves. While we "muse" on such instances of his goodness, the reflection is obvious, Is he not still the same gracious God? Will he not do as much for us, upon our repentance, as he hath formerly done for others, upon theirs? "Let us arise, and go to our Father!"

6. *I stretch forth my hands unto thee; my soul* thirsteth *after thee as a thirsty land.*

Prayer is the voice of faith. The sinner who views his situation, and believes, on having considered God's works of old, that he shall be delivered out of it, will soon "stretch forth his hands" in supplication to heaven. His soul will gasp and pant after that grace and mercy which descend from above, like the rain in its season, to bestow refreshment, beauty, and fertility, on a parched and "thirsty land." While we recite this verse, let us not be unmindful of Him, whose hands were often stretched forth in prayer for his people, and whose soul thirsteth after our salvation, even then, when he felt the extremity of bodily thirst on the cross.

7. *Hear me speedily, O* LORD: *my spirit faileth; hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit.*

These words would come with propriety

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from the mouth of one in danger of temporal death. They are no less proper in the mouth of him who is in danger of death eternal. Rather, they receive an additional force and energy when used in this latter sense.

8. *Cause me to hear thy loving kindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee.*

The penitent prayeth, that he may "hear the voice of God's loving kindness," speaking pardon and peace to his soul, "in the morning" speedily and early, after the long dark night of fear and sorrow, through which he is passing. This he hopes, because, disclaiming all other reliance, he placeth his confidence in God alone; "in thee do I trust." Nor is he only solicitous for the forgiveness of what is past, but for future direction in the course of duty; "show thou me the way wherein I should walk." And to the end that he may follow such directions, he hath withdrawn his affections from things below, and set them on things above; "I lift up my soul unto thee."

9. *Deliver me, O* LORD, *from mine enemies: I flee unto thee to hide me.* 10. *Teach me to do thy will: for thou* art *my God: thy Spirit* is *good; lead me,* or, *let thy good Spirit lead me, into the land of uprightness.*

He continueth to pray that he may be "delivered from his enemies," the world, the flesh, and the devil, from whose temptations he "fleeth," by repentance and faith, to the Almighty, to "hide" and protect him. He requesteth to be fully instructed in the "will" of him, whom, as his Lord and his "God," he hath determined to serve and obey. But conscious of his own inability to do the will of Jehovah, even when known, he entreateth the good Spirit of God to "lead" him out of the mazes of error and the pollutions of vice, into the pleasant "land" of truth and holiness.*

11. *Quicken me, O* LORD, *for thy name's sake: for thy righteousness' sake, bring my soul out of trouble.* 12. *And of thy mercy cut off mine enemies, and destroy all them that afflict my soul: for* I am *thy servant.*

The verbs in these two last verses, as Dr. Hammond hath noted, should be rendered in the future; "Thou shalt quicken," &c. and then the Psalm will end, as usual, with an act of faith and assurance, that all those mercies which have been asked shall be obtained; that God, for the sake of his "name," and his "righteousness," of his glory, and his faithfulness in the performance of his promises, will not fail to be favorable and gracious to his servants, "quickening" them, even when dead in trespasses and sins, and bringing them, by degrees, "out of all their troubles;" going forth with them to the battle against their spiritual "enemies," and enabling them to vanquish the authors of their "affliction" and misery, to mortify the flesh, and to overcome the world; that so they may triumph with their Redeemer, in the day when he shall likewise quicken their mortal bodies, and put all enemies under their feet.

* Mr. Merrick mentions the similar phrase of πεδιον αληθειας, and λειμων αγηθειας, among the Greeks. Or ארץ ישור may signify "the land that is plain and direct, even and straight," where he might pursue his intended course of piety and goodness, without fear of meeting with obstructions in the way, or danger of wandering out of it.

THIRTIETH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM CXLIV.

ARGUMENT.

IT appears from verse 2, and verse 10, of this Psalm, that it was composed after David's accession to the throne. And it is evident, from verse 5, &c. that he had more enemies still to conquer, such as the Philistines, &c. He, therefore, 1, 2, blesseth Jehovah; and, 3, 4, expresseth his astonishment at the divine goodness shown to such a creature as man; 5—8, he beseecheth God to perfect his work, and subdue the remaining adversaries by the might of his power. 9, 10, He breaks forth again into a strain of thanksgiving, and, 11—15, again returns to his prayers for the complete redemption, and the prosperity of Israel. If we substitute in our minds, Messiah for David, the church for Israel, and spiritual for temporal blessings, the Psalm will present itself to us, as a noble evangelical hymn.

1. *Blessed be the* LORD *my strength, which teacheth my hands to war,* and *my fingers to fight.*

What David here acknowledgeth, with regard to his victories, and that skill or might by which they were obtained, should be likewise acknowledged by all earthly kings and generals, in the day of battle and conquest. For success in our spiritual warfare, we depend on the grace of God, which alone can give us wisdom and "strength to have victory, and triumph against sin, the world, and the devil." Even the Captain of our salvation fought and overcame by a power that was divine. "Jehovah taught HIS hands to war, and HIS fingers to fight."

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And "blessed," on that account, be the name of Jehovah, in the church, for evermore.

2. *My goodness*, Heb. *my mercy*,* *and my fortress; my high tower, and my deliverer: my shield, and* he *in whom I trust; who subdueth my people under me.*

The "goodness," or "mercy," of God inclineth us in time of trouble, to fly to him as to a "fortress," or "tower," in which we find refuge; and when we have thus put ourselves under his patronage, he becometh our "deliverer" from present danger; our "shield," or protector, against any that may afterwards arise; the object of our unlimited "trust" and confidence; and, at last, the "subduer" of all opposition, "under us."

3. LORD, *what* is *man, that thou takest knowledge of him?* or *the son of man, that thou makest account of him?* 4. *Man is like to vanity: his days* are *as a shadow that passeth away.*

After a thanksgiving for the works which Jehovah had wrought, followeth a reflection on the creature "man," for whom they were wrought. Such a reflection introduced in the same manner, and almost in the same words, we meet with in Ps. viii. 4, which passage, being cited by the apostle, Heb. ii. 6, and applied to Christ, affords an argument, as Dr. Hammond hath justly observed, for a like application of the verses now before us, in their more eminent, prophetic, mystical sense. For, certainly, if David, upon the remembrance of what God had done for him, could break forth into this reflection, much more may we do so, for whom the Redeemer hath been manifested in the form of a servant, and in that form hath humbled himself to the death of the cross, to gain us the victory over principalities and powers, to put all things under our feet, and to make us partakers of his everlasting kingdom. Lord, what, indeed, is man, אדם, or, what is the son of such a miserable creature, בן־אנוש, that thou shouldst take this knowledge, and make this account of him? man, who is now become like vanity, or instability itself; whose days are fleeting and transient as a shadow, which glides over the earth, vanishes, and is seen no more! Such was human nature: but the Son of God hath taken it upon himself, rendered it immortal, and exalted it to heaven; whither all will follow him hereafter, who follow him now in the paths of righteousness and holiness.

5. *Bow thy heavens, O* LORD, *and come down; touch the mountains and they shall smoke.* 6. *Cast forth lightning and scatter them; shoot out thine arrows, and destroy them.* 7. *Send thine hand from above; rid me, and deliver me out of great waters, from the hand of strange children;* 8. *Whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood.*

David, having celebrated his victories over some of his enemies, and extolled the mercy and goodness of God, to whom he ascribeth the achievement of them, now proceedeth to to request a farther manifestation of the omnipotent arm in his favor, against other hostile forces, which still threatened his country, upon his accession to the throne; such as the Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites, &c. see 2 Sam. v. and viii. These are called, metaphorically, "great waters," threatening to overwhelm and destroy every thing; and, in plainer terms, "strange children," or aliens from the covenant of Jehovah, and the commonwealth of Israel; children who "speak lies, and work wickedness;" or, as Dr. Hammond interpreteth the 8th verse, "whose mouth speaketh, or maketh profession of vanity, שוא, that is, idolatry; and their right hand," that on which they depend for support, the object of their confidence, "is a right hand of falsehood," שוא, and one that will fail all who rely upon it for help. Jehovah, the God of Israel, is therefore entreated once more to appear in the cause of his anointed; to go forth, as of old, to the battle against the enemies of his people, with all the tokens of displeasure and vengeance, dismaying and putting to flight these "armies of aliens." In like manner, the church, or mystical body of Christ, is instant in prayer for the final completion of her hope. She wished for the glorious day, when her God and Saviour shall bow the heavens, and come down to judgment, causing the mountains to smoke, and flame, and dissolve, and flow down before him; when his lightnings, those arrows of his indignation, and ministers of his vengeance, shall scatter the host of darkness, and destroy the anti-christian powers; when we shall be delivered from every enemy, and from all that hate us, and David our King.

9. *I will sing a new song unto thee, O God: upon a psaltery,* and *an instrument of ten strings, will I sing praise unto thee.* 10. It is he *that giveth salvation unto kings: who delivereth David his servant from the hurtful sword.*

In the mean time, as the Israelitish church praised Jehovah for the mercies already

* That is, "who art merciful to me," the abstract being put for the concrete, as in Ps. xii. 1. Prov. x. 29. Ezek. xliv. 6. Hos. viii. 9. Dr. Durell thinks we should read, חסי, "my refuge," as in other parallel places.

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vouchsafed to the son of Jesse, so do we daily magnify, with voices and instruments of music, that salvation which God hath effected for us, by the deliverance of his Son, our Lord, from death and the grave.

11. *Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children, whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand* is *a right hand of falsehood:* 12. *That our sons* may be *as plants grown up in their youth;* that *our daughters* may be *as corner stones, polished* after *the similitude of a palace.* 13. That *our garners* may be *full, affording all manner of store,* that *our sheep may bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our streets,* or, *fields:* 14. That *our oxen* man be *strong to labor;* that there be *no breaking in, nor going out; that* there be *no complaining in our streets.*

Prayer is again made for a continuance of God's favor, and a complete victory over every enemy; the happy consequences of which, in the establishment of Israel, and the prosperity of Jerusalem, are particularly described. Victory is productive of peace, and peace is the mother of all earthly blessings to communities, and the families that compose them; whose happiness consisteth in a numerous and hopeful progeny of sons and daughters; the former healthy and well nurtured, growing up, like young plants in a kindly soil, until they attain to their full strength and stature; the latter, fair and virtuous, like so many tall, well-proportioned, highly polished, and richly ornamented columns, gracing the house to which they belong. When to these we have added plenty of corn, and all other provisions, in the granaries and storehouses, flocks and herds, ever thriving and increasing; freedom from hostile invasions and domestic complaints, so that there be "no breaking in, nor going out," no irruption of aliens into the commonwealth, nor emigration of inhabitants to foreign countries, by captivity, or otherwise; we shall find ourselves possessed of most of the ingredients, which enter into the composition of temporal felicity. Such felicity God promised to his people Israel, and bestowed on them, while they kept his statutes, and observed his laws. And therefore there is no reason for supposing, as the fathers, with many others, have done, that these wishes for "sons, daughters, corn, sheep, oxen, &c." are uttered by the "strange children," the aliens and idolaters, mentioned in the 11th verse. The good things of this world may fall to the lot of the righteous, who are distinguished from the wicked by the use which they make of them, when given; and by their meek resignation of them, when taken away. Whatever be the will of God concerning our having or wanting these outward comforts, we know that we have, as the faithful servants of God in every age had before us, greater and more precious promises, a better and an enduring substance, pleasures that fade not, and riches that fly not away, reserved for us in a heavenly country, and a city which hath foundations.

15. *Happy* is that *people that is in such a case;* yea, *happy* is that *people, whose God* is *the* LORD.

The Psalmist concludes with pronouncing the happiness of the Israelites, when in the state of prosperity above described, and their far greater happiness in "having Jehovah for their God," who, by setting them in peaceful possession of the land of Canaan, and the Jerusalem below, gave them a pledge and foretaste of that love, which stood engaged by covenant to bring them and us to his everlasting rest, in the Jerusalem above.

PSALM CXLV.

ARGUMENT.

HITHERTO, in this divine book, we have been presented with checkered scenes of danger and deliverance, distress and mercy. The voice of complaint hath sometimes been succeeded by that of thanksgiving; and praise, at other times, hath terminated in prayer. But now, as if the days of mourning in Zion were ended, we hear no more of Messiah, as a man of sorrows; or of the church, as despised and afflicted, after the same example, in the world. Henceforth we seem not to be upon earth, but in heaven, mingling with celestial spirits around the throne, and singing, as in the following Psalm, 1, 2, the praises of our God and King; extolling, 3, his greatness, 4, his might, 5, his glory, 6, 7, his justice, 8, 9, his mercy; 10—13, the majesty of his kingdom, and, 14—21, all his adorable perfections, and wondrous works. This is an alphabetical Psalm. The verse, which should begin with the letter Nun, is wanting. But, as Dr. Hammond hath observed, it is not uncommon for one letter, or more, to be left out in an alphabetical Psalm, as in Ps. xxv. where ר, being twice repeated, פ is certainly omitted. We shall therefore content ourselves, with what we find in the original Hebrew, and in the Chaldee, without inserting the verse which is now read in the lxx, and other translations. Bishop Patrick mentions a saying of the ancient Hebrews, taken notice of by Valentine Schindler, that "He could not fail to be a child of the world to come, who would

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say this Psalm three times every day." Perhaps they who, while they chant it in full choir, enter thoroughly into the spirit of it, do experience as lively a foretaste of the next world, as can be experienced in this.

1. *I will extol thee, my God, O King; and will bless thy name for ever and ever.* 2. *Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thy name for ever and ever.*

The same divine person, who was, in a peculiar manner, the "God" and "King" of Israel, now standeth in those relations to the Gentile Christian church, and by her is "extolled" in the words of this Psalm, originally composed and used for that purpose among the Israelites. Christ is our "God," who hath saved us according to his covenant and promise; he is our "King," who hath set up the universal and everlasting kingdom, foretold by Daniel, and the other prophets; who hath "all power in heaven and earth;" and who "must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet, and swallowed up death in victory." In the mean time it is the daily employment of us, his redeemed subjects and servants, to chant forth the praises of his saving and glorious "name," with which the church, on earth, and in heaven, will resound "for ever and ever."

3. *Great is the* LORD, *and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable.* 4. *One generation shall praise thy works unto another, and shall declare thy mighty acts.*

The "greatness" of Jehovah, whether we consider it as relating to his essence, or his works, is never to be fully comprehended by his saints, whose delight it is to contemplate "the breadth, and length, and depth, and height," Ephes. iii. 18, the extent and duration of his Being and his kingdom, the profundity of his counsels, and the sublimity of his power and glory. These are the inexhaustible subjects of divine meditation, transmitted from age to age. And as the greatness of God our Saviour hath no bounds, so his praises should have no end, nor should the voice of thanksgiving ever cease in the church. As "one generation" drops it, "another" should take it up, and prolong the delightful strain, till the sun and the moon shall withdraw their light, and the stars fall extinguished from their orbs.

5. *I will speak of the glorious honor of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works.* 6. *And* men *shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts: and I will declare thy greatness.* 7. *They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness.*

Those works of God, which demand to be celebrated by the tongues of men, are here divided into three kinds. First, such as declare his glory, and excite our admiration, whenever we behold them. Of this sort are the shining frame of the heavens, and all the bodies which move therein; the earth, with its furniture without, and its contents within; the magnificent and stupendous ocean, which flows around it; the different tribes of animals inhabiting both the one and the other; and, above all, the construction of man, the lord of this lower world. Under the second class of God's works are ranged all those which the Psalmist styleth his "terrible acts," or the exertions of his power against his enemies; such as, the destruction of the old world by water; of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire; of Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea; of the Canaanitish nations by the sword; and the victory gained over sin and death by the resurrection of Christ. In the third rank stand those works which have proceeded from the "goodness" of God, and his "righteousness" in the performance of his promises. And among these we may reckon all the different species of provision, which have been made by providence for the bodies of men in the world, and by grace for their souls in the church. On any of these subjects meditation cannot be long employed, without breaking forth into wonder, gratitude, and praise.

8. *The* LORD *is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.* 9. *The* LORD *is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.*

Mercy hath misery for its object, and is that attribute, towards which the eyes of a fallen world must naturally be turned. The Psalmist hath, accordingly, introduced her last, with great pomp and splendor, seated in her triumphal chariot, and invested with a supremacy over all the works of God. She is above the heavens, and over all the earth, so that the whole creation findeth that refuge under the shadow of her wings, of which, by reason of man's transgression, it standeth in need. The original word for "his tender mercies," is רחמיו, the singular of which רחם, signifies the "womb." The "mercies" of God towards man, are, therefore, represented, by this word, to be like those of a mother towards the child of her "womb." And this is the very similitude which he himself hath made use of, in that most affecting and comforting passage of the prophecy of Isaiah, chap. xlix. 15: "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." And now, what follows? Are such "tender mer-

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cies" in God? And are they "over all his works?" Why then,

10. *All thy works shall praise thee, O* LORD: *and thy saints shall bless thee.* 11. *They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power;* 12. *To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom.* 13. *Thy kingdom* is *an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion* endureth *throughout all generations.*

As "all the works" of God, in their several ways, make a due return for the mercy vouchsafed unto them, and set forth his glory; so more especially ought this to be done by man, who is the principal party concerned in the fall and redemption. The "saints" are the subjects of Messiah's kingdom; and of that kingdom it is their duty to publish to the world the blessings and the glories, to the end that, when these are made known, the nations may be thereby induced to submit their hearts to so gracious a sceptre, and the dominion of Christ may become as universal in its extent, as it is everlasting in its duration.

14. *The* LORD *upholdeth all that fall, and ruiseth up all* those that be *bowed down.*

After having proclaimed the glory and eternity of the kingdom, the prophet draws a character of the King, who, in the execution of his regal and pastoral office, is ever mindful of the necessities of his subjects. To those who, like Peter on the water, are sinking under temptation, he stretcheth out his saving arm, supporting and "upholding" them by his grace; and to those who, like the woman in the Gospel, have long been "bowed down" with sin or sorrow, he holdeth forth a pardon, "raising" and setting them upright again by his mercy. The case is the same with regard to outward distresses, from which God either preserves or delivers his people, as he sees best for them.

15. *The eyes of all wait upon thee: and thou givest them their meat in due season.* 16. *Thou openest thy hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.*

What a just and beautiful picture is here presented to view! We see the whole animal world before us, with their eyes fixed on the great King and Father of all things, like those of a flock on their shepherd, when he enters the field, in time of dearth, with provender for them. From the same divine person, as the Saviour of men, as the King, Father, and Pastor of the church, do believers, with earnest expectation, wait for the food of eternal life. And neither one nor the other look and wait in vain. To both he leveth their meat in due season; "he openeth his hand, and satisfieth the desire of every living thing."

17. *The* LORD *is righteous in all his ways, and holy,* or, *good, merciful, in all his works.*

"Thus, "in all his ways," or dispensations towards his creatures, whether in nature, or in grace, "Jehovah is righteous," faithful and just, in extending his promised care, by making due provision for their wants; and "all his works," which, from the beginning of the world, he hath wrought in behalf of the sons of men, are full of "mercy and loving kindness."

18. *The* LORD *is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.* 19. *He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them.*

It is our happiness to have a King, who is not, like earthly princes, difficult of access, but one of whom the meanest subject may at any time obtain an audience, and be certain of having his request granted, if it be made "in truth," without wavering, and without hypocrisy, with humble confidence, and with unwearied constancy, expecting salvation from God, from none but him, and from him only in the way of duty and obedience: "he will fulfil the desire of them that fear him."

20. *The* LORD *preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy.*

To protect his subjects, and destroy their enemies, is the finishing part of the regal character, as here drawn from its great original in "the King of saints." By his grace he now preserveth us from innumerable dangers and temptations, and gradually destroyeth sin in us: and by his power he will hereafter execute, in the fullest and most extensive sense, this part of his office, "when the wicked shall be consumed with the spirit of his mouth, and destroyed with the brightness of his coming." Then the bodies of the righteous, preserved to a joyful resurrection, shall be reunited to their souls, and both together, perfected and glorified, shall reign and shine with him for ever. Thus the Lord Jesus Christ "preserveth all that love him," and maketh good his promise, "There shall not an hair of your head perish." Luke, xxi. 18.

21. *My mouth shall speak the praise of the* LORD; *and let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever.*

The Psalmist, having now given the reasons why he had resolved to "extol his God and King, and to bless his name for ever," concludes with repeating his resolution, and exhorts all the world to follow his example, in time and eternity.

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PSALM CXLVI.

ARGUMENT.

IN this Psalm, the church is taught, 1, 2, to prolong the praises of Jehovah, as her God and King; 3—6, to beware of trusting in the powers of the world, and to rely on the world's Creator and Redeemer, whose miracles of love and mercy, wrought for the children of men, 7—9, are enumerated, and the eternity of whose kingdom, 10, is proclaimed.

1. *Praise ye the* LORD. *Praise the* LORD, *O my soul.* 2. *While I live I will praise the* LORD, *I will sing praises unto my God, while I have any being.*

No sooner is one Hallelujah ended, but another begins; and the prophet, in imitation of those who "rest not day or night," stirs himself up afresh to praise the King of glory, the Creator and Redeemer of men, declaring himself resolved to employ the powers and faculties of his soul in the service of that God, who gave and preserved them.

3. *Put not your trust in princes,* nor *in the son of man, in whom* there is *no help.* 4. *His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; and in that very day his thoughts perish.* 5. *Happy* is he *that* hath *the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope* is *in the* LORD *his God:* 6. *Which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein* is: *which keepeth truth forever:*

From Him, who is "the prince of the kings of the earth," Sion looks for deliverance, and by Him her true sons expect to be exalted. HE "keepeth truth for ever;" he is able and willing to perform his promises, and never disappoints those who rely on him. There are no changes in the politics of heaven. The faithful servant of his Master is by that Master infallibly approved and rewarded. Earthly princes, if they have the will, often want the power, even to protect their friends. And should they want neither will nor power to advance them, yet still all depends upon the breath in their nostrils, which, perhaps, at the very critical moment, "goeth forth; they return to their earth; their thoughts," and all the thoughts of those who had hoped to rise by their means, fall into the same grave, and are buried with them for ever. "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of? But trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." Isa. ii. 22. xxvi. 4.

7. *Which executeth judgment for the oppressed: which giveth food to the hungry.* 8. *The* LORD *looseth the prisoners: the* LORD *openeth* the eyes of *the blind: the* LORD *raiseth them that are bowed down: the* LORD *loveth the righteous:* 9. *The* LORD *preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and the widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.*

That the Lord, of whom all these things are spoken, is the Messiah, or Jehovah incarnate, appears, as Dr. Hammond hath justly observed, from what is said of him in verse 8. "The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind;" the miracle of restoring sight to men born blind being one reserved for the Son of God to work, at his coming in the flesh. "Since the world began," saith the man to whom sight had been thus restored, "was it not heard, that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind;" John, ix, 32. This therefore was the first of those tokens given by Jesus to the disciples of John, whereby it might be known, that he was the expected Christ; "Go and tell John the things which ye have heard and seen; The blind receive their sight," &c. But how did this evince him to be the Messiah? Plainly, because it had been foretold by the prophets (as in Isaiah, xxv. 5, xxix. 18, xlii. 18. so in this passage of our Psalm, which is exactly similar to those texts,) that Messiah, when he came, should give sight to the blind. Now, if one part of the Psalmist's description belong to Christ, the other members of it must do so likewise, it being evident that the whole is spoken of the same person. He, therefore, is "the God of Jacob, who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that therein is;" and, upon his appearing among men in the body of our flesh, he showed himself possessed of power to relieve all the wants, corporeal and spiritual, of poor lost mankind. When he rescued man from the bondage of Satan, he "executed judgment for the oppressed:" when he fed thousands by a miracle, or when he preached the word to such as desired to hear and receive it, he "gave food to the hungry:" when, by pardon and grace, he released those who were bound with the chains of their sins, he "loosed the prisoners:" when he poured light into the sightless eye-ball, or illuminated with saving knowledge the understanding of the ignorant, he "opened the eyes of the blind:" when he made the crooked woman straight, or rectified the obliquity of a depraved will, he "raised those that were bowed down:" while he protecteth, and guideth to the city of their eternal habitation, the sons of Adam, who are exiles, pilgrims, and sojourners upon earth, he "preserveth the strangers:" when he became a husband to the church, and a parent to her destitute children, he "relieved the fatherless and widow:" and when he

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shall come in his glorious majesty, to reward his servants, and to confound their enemies, it will be seen how "he loveth the righteous, and turneth the way of the wicked upside down." Happy the people of such a God; happy the subjects of such a King! Rejoice, and sing, and shout aloud; for lo,

10. *The* LORD *shall reign for ever,* even *thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. Praise ye the* LORD.

THIRTIETH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM CXLVII.

ARGUMENT.

IT hath been conjectured, from ver. 2, that this Psalm was written to celebrate the return of Israel from Babylon, when Jerusalem and the temple were rebuilt. 1—3, The people of God are exhorted to praise him for the mercies vouchsafed to them; 4—6, for his wisdom, power, and goodness; 7—9, for his providential care, and, 10—11, the wonderful salvation wrought by his arm; 12—14, for the security, increase, and prosperity of the church; 15—18, for the happy change of her condition, like that produced in nature, when spring succeeds to winter; 19, 20, and for the glorious privilege of the divine word, revealed and committed to her.

1. *Praise ye the* LORD: *for* it is *good to sing praises unto our God; for* it is *pleasant;* and *praise is comely.*

Praise is "good" and acceptable to God our Saviour, whose glory is the great end of man's creation and redemption: and it is "pleasant and comely" for man, being the only return he can make for those, and all other mercies; the offspring of gratitude, and the expression of love; the elevation of the soul, and the antepast of heaven; its own reward in this life, and an introduction to the felicities of the next.

2. *The* LORD *doth build up Jerusalem: he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel.*

If this Psalm were written on the occasion of the return from Babylon, and the rebuilding of the earthly city, the ideas are to be transferred, as in other Psalms of the same kind, to a more important restoration from a much worse captivity, and to the building up of the church under the Gospel, when Christ "gathered together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad;" John, xi. 52, that is, in the words of our Psalm, he "gathered together the outcasts of Israel!" So shall he again, at the resurrection, "gather together his elect from the four winds," Matt. xxiv. 31, and "build up a Jerusalem," in which they shall serve and praise him for ever.

3. *He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.*

The "broken hearts and wounded spirits" of the Israelites were "healed and made whole," when they returned to their own land, when they beheld Jerusalem rising again in beauteous majesty, and sung the songs of Zion in the courts of the temple. Thus Christ came "to preach deliverance to the "captives, and to bind up the broken-hearted;" Isa. lxi. 1. Luke, iv. 18, to speak pardon and peace to the wounded and contrite spirit, and to put a new song of thanksgiving in the mouth of the penitent, which he might sing, when restored to the holy city, and the house of his heavenly Father. The hour is coming, when God shall heal the breaches which death has made in the bodies of his people, and translate them likewise from Babylon to Jerusalem.

4. *He telleth the number of the stars: he calleth them by* their *names.*

And he who does this, cannot be ignorant of the situation and circumstances of his elect. He knoweth each individual, and numbereth all the atoms which go to the composition of his frame. He can call his saints from the depths of earth and sea, "by their names," as when once "he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth;" and he can fix them in radiant circles round his throne in the kingdom of glory, vying, for multitude, as well as splendor, with those bright orbs which glitter by night in the spangled firmament of heaven; so that what Baruch said of the stars, may well be applied to the seed of Abraham, of whom it was foretold, that they should equal the stars in number, Gen. xv. 5. "The stars shine in their watches, and rejoice; when he calleth, they say, Here we be; and so with cheerfulness they show light unto him that made them." Baruch, iii. 34.

5. *Great* is *our* LORD, *and of great power: his understanding* is *infinite:* Heb. *of his understand there is no number,* or, *computation;* אין מספר.

This is a proper conclusion drawn from the former part of the Psalm, and especially from the preceding verse. The greatness of God's power, which overcometh all difficulties to effect the salvation of his people, is not to be grasped by the human mind; and that wisdom which numbers the stars of heaven, and the sand of the sea, and the generations of the sons of Abraham, can itself be subject to the rules of no arithmetic.

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6. *The* LORD *lifteth up the meek: he casteth the wicked down to the ground.*

To exalt and reward the humble, penitent, believing, and obedient; to depress and punish the proud, impenitent, unbelieving, and disobedient; these are the measures and ends of all the divine dispensations. And as a man ranks himself in one or other of these two divisions, he may expect from heaven storm or sunshine, mercy or judgment.

7. *Sing unto the* LORD *with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God.* 8. *Who covereth the heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains.* 9. *He giveth to the beast his food,* and *to the ravens which cry.*

The faithful praise God for his goodness to the animal world, both on account of that goodness in itself, and also because they behold therein an emblem and assurance of his mercy to themselves. The watchful care of Providence over all creatures, speaks the same language to us, which Jehovah made use of to Joshua, and which the apostle hath applied to Christians: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee:" Josh. i. 5. Heb. xiii. 5. He who, by sending rain on the mountains, which could not otherwise be watered, provideth food for the wild beasts inhabiting those mountains, will never leave the lambs of his flock destitute. And he who feedeth the young of the unclean raven, when they cry, and, as it were, in their way, call upon him for a supply of their wants, will he, in the day of dearth and calamity, forsake the meek and harmless dove, that mourneth continually in prayer before him? The desponding servant of God need only therefore put to himself the question which we find asked by the Creator, in the book of Job, chap. xxxviii. 41: "Who provideth for the raven his food? When his young ones cry unto God, they wander for lack of meat;" they wander and find it. Our Lord pressed this argument on his disciples; Luke, xii. 24. "Consider the ravens;" Matt. vi. 26. Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?"

Behold, and look away your low despair;
See the light tenants of the barren air:
To them, nor stroes, nor granaries belong,
Nought but the woodland, and the pleasing song;
Yet, your kind heav'nly Father bends his eye
On the least wing that flits along the sky,
To him they sing, when spring renews the plain,
To him they cry, in winter's pinching reign;
Nor is their music, nor their plant in vain:
He hears the gay, and the distressful call,
And with unsparing bounty fills them all.
Will he not care for you, ye faithless, say?
Is he unwise? Or, are ye less than they?
THOMSON

10. *He delighteth not in the strength of the horse: he taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man.* 11. *The* LORD *taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.*

If, therefore, the inference deduced above be a just one, namely, that God, who takes care of the wild beasts, and the birds of the air, will support and defend his church; then, however weak she may be, and however strong her adversaries may be, yet she may rest secure, as having him on her side, to whom it is equal, to save by many, or by few; who giveth not the victory to the pomp and pride of carnal strength, to thousands, or ten thousands, but to "those who fear him, and hope in his mercy." The history of Israel is one continual exemplification of this truth; and, in our spiritual warfare, "this is the victory which overcometh the world, even our FAITH." 1 John, v. 4.

12. *Praise the* LORD, *O Jerusalem; praise thy God, O Zion.* 13. *For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates; he hath blessed thy children within thee.* 14. *He maketh peace* in *thy borders,* and *filleth thee with the finest of the wheat.*

The church, like Jerusalem of old, erected and preserved by the wisdom, and power, and goodness of God, is exhorted to praise him for all the benefits and blessings vouchsafed unto her; for the increase of "her children within her;" for the "peace" which she at any time enjoyeth "in her borders," while she is here below; for the plentiful provision made by her pastors, to satisfy the needs of those who "hunger and thirst after righteousness;" and for the protection of the Almighty, "strengthening the bars of her gates," and securing to her the possession of all these comforts; which, in the heavenly Jerusalem, shall be rendered perfect and indefeasible for evermore.

15. *He sendeth forth his commandment* upon *earth: his word runneth very swiftly.* 16. *He giveth snow like wool: he scattereth the hoar frost like ashes.* 17. *He casteth forth his ice like morsels: who can stand before his cold?* 18. *He sendeth out his word, and melteth them: he causeth his wind to blow,* and *the waters flow.*

The wonders of nature represent to us the miracles of grace, and the change of seasons produceth not greater alterations in the world, than those which take place in the church, when her God hideth from her, or restoreth to her, the light of his countenance,

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which, like its emblem, the bright ruler in the heavens, at its departure leaves winter behind it; and brings the sun with it at its return. "The sun," says Bishop Sherlock, "is the great spirit of the world, in the light of which all things are made to rejoice; perpetual spring attends his course; all things revive at his approach, and put on a new face of youth and beauty; winter and frost lag behind him; nature grows deformed, and sickens at his departure." Discourses, vol. v. What the sun is to the world, the same is Christ to the church. When the heart of man turns away from him, and deprives itself of his gracious illumination; when ignorance succeeds to knowledge, that is, darkness to light; when faith fails, and all its fair productions wither away; when "the love of many is waxen cold," and the fertilizing streams of charity are frozen to the bottom: On the other hand, when God "sendeth out his WORD, and melteth them;" when he "bloweth with his SPIRIT, and," by these genial influences from above, "the waters are made to flow;" when faith revives, and shoots into vigor, and beauty, and fruitfulness; and when the hearts of men are warmed, as well as their understandings illuminated; what is all this, but a winter, and a spring, like those which, in their turns, annually deform and renew the face of the earth, at the "word and command of God," in either case, "running swiftly," and operating efficaciously?

19. *He showeth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel.* 20. *He hath not dealt so with any nation: and* as for his *judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the* LORD.

The "word," the effects of which upon the spiritual system are similar to those experienced by nature in the vernal season, that "word was showed unto Jacob," and became the property of "Israel," while Israel continued to be the church of God. It hath since been made over, with all its types realized, and its prophecies accomplished in Jesus, to the church Christian; it is that peculiar blessing which distinguishes her from the rest of the world, and for which her children are bound, at all times, to "praise the LORD."

PSALM CXLVIII.

ARGUMENT.

All the creatures in the invisible and visible world are called upon by the Psalmist to unite in a grand chorus of praise and thanksgiving. The various parts are to be performedby, 1, 2, the angellc hosts; 3—6, the material heavens, and the luminaries placed in them; 7, the ocean, with its inhabitants; 8, the meteors of the air; 9, 10, the earth, as divided into hills and valleys, with the vegetables that grow out of it, and the animals that move upon, or about it; 11—13, the human race of every degree, of each sex, and of every age; 14, more especially the Israel, or church of God.

1. *Praise ye the* LORD. *Praise ye the* LORD *from the heavens: praise him in the heights.* 2. *Praise ye him, all ye angels; praise ye him, all his hosts.*

When St. John saw in vision the King of glory seated on his throne, he tells us that he heard all the angels which stood around the throne, with the elders, and every creature in heaven, earth, and sea, lifting up their voices, and singing together a hymn of thanksgiving in honor of him. Such a choir we find here summoned by the inspired Psalmist, and exhorted to join and assist him in praising the same Divine Person, whom the elders, in the Revelation, declare "worthy to receive glory, and honor, and power," because he "created all things, and for his pleasure, they are, and were created:" Rev. v. 13, iv. 11. From the heavens and those unutterable heights, where hosts of immortal spirits, admitted to a sight of their King, enjoy unfading pleasures, the song is to begin. And when the strain is thus set by the celestial part of the choir, it is to be taken up, and echoed back, by the creatures of this lower world, animate and inanimate, which have all their several parts assigned them, in the great work of glorifying their Creator.

3. *Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light.* 4. *Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens.* 5. *Let them praise the name of the* LORD: *for he commanded, and they were created.* 6. *He hath also established them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass.*

The material heavens, through all their various regions, with the luminaries placed in them, and the waters sustained by them, though they have neither speech nor language, and want the tongue of men, yet, by their splendor and magnificence, their motions and their influences, all regulated and exerted according to the ordinance of their Maker, do, in a very intelligible and striking manner, declare the glory of God: they call upon us to translate their actions into our language, and copy their obedience in our lives; that so we may, both by word

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and deed, glorify, with them, the Creator and Redeemer of the Universe.

7. *Praise the* LORD *from the earth, ye dragons*, or, *whales, and all deeps.*

From heaven above, the Psalmist descendeth to the deep beneath, which, while it proclaims the power, observes the laws and decrees of him who made it, and poured it abroad. And the same may be said of its enormous inhabitants, which are under the command of Jehovah, and of none but him.

8. *Fire and hail; snow and vapors, stormy wind fulfilling his word.*

These are so many messengers, always ready to go forth, at the command of the Most High, for the purposes of mercy, or judgment. They praise and glorify God after their manner, while they "fulfil his word" upon the earth.

9. *Mountains and hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars:* 10. *Beasts and cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl:*

Who shall ever understand and comprehend all the wisdom of God displayed in the vegetable world, from the cedar to the hyssop; in the animal, from the elephant to the pismire, from the eagle to the sparrow? The more we study them, the more we shall find him glorified in them; and the more, on that account, will he be glorified by us.

11. *Kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth:* 12. *Both young men, and maidens: old men and children:* 13. *Let them praise the name of the* LORD: *for his name alone is excellent; his glory* is *above the earth and heaven.**

After the whole creation hath been called upon to praise Jehovah; man, for whom the whole was made; man, the last and most perfect work of God; man, that hath been since redeemed by the blood of the Son of God incarnate, is exhorted to join and fill up the universal chorus of heaven and earth, as being connected with both worlds, that which now is, and that which is to come. Persons of every degree, of each sex, and of every age; "kings," whose power God hath made an image of his own, and who are the suns of their respective systems; "judges," and magistrates of all kinds, who derive their power, as the moon and planets do their light, from its original source; "young men and maidens," in the flower of health, strength and beauty; "old men," who have accomplished their warfare, and are going out of life; "children," who are just come into it, and see every thing new before them; all these have their several reasons for "praising the Lord, whose name is excellent, and his glory above heaven and earth."

14. *He also exalteth the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints*, even *of the children of Israel, a people near unto him. Praise ye the* LORD.

As men, above all other creatures, so, above other men, the "Israel" of God, the "people" that are admitted to draw "near unto him," in his house, by faith and charity, by prayer and participation of the sacraments, are bound to praise him, who now "exalteth" them from sin to righteousness, and will hereafter exalt them from dust to glory.

Since few of my readers may, pehaps, have met with a paraphrase on the foregoing Psalm, that has hitherto, I believe, only made its appearance in a periodical publication or two, I shall take the liberty to subjoin it, as a piece, which cannot but be acceptable to all true lovers of sacred poetry. It was written, as I have been lately informed, by the learned and ingenious Dr. OGILVIE, at sixteen years of age.

PSALM CXLVIII.

I.

Begin, my soul, th' exalted lay,
Let each enraptur'd thought obey,
And praise the Almighty's name.
Lo! heaven and earth, and seas and skies,
In one melodious concert rise,
To swell th' inspiring theme.

II.

Ye fields of light, celestial plains,
Where gay transporting beauty reigns,
Ye scenes divinely fair;
Your Maker's wondrous power proclaim,
Tell how he form'd your shining frame,
And breath'd the fluid air.

III.

Ye angels, catch the thrilling sound;
While all th' adoring thrones around
His boundless mercy sing;
Let ev'ry list'ning saint above
Wake all the tuneful soul of love,
And touch the sweetest string.

IV.

Join, ye loud spheres, the vocal choir;
Thou, dazzling orb of liquid fire,
The mighty chorus aid:
Soon as grey ev'ning gilds the plain,
Thou, moon, protract the melting strain,
And praise him in the shade.

V.

Thou, heav'n of heav'ns, his vast abode,
Ye clouds, proclaim your forming God,
Who call'd yon worlds from night;

* Nec ad solos Hebræos haec pertinet adhortatio, sed ad omnes omnino homines: estque adeo veluti proludium vocationis Gentilium. Deum enim laudare, ut par est, non possunt, qui cum non bene norunt, qui Evangelium nunquam audiverunt; e quo maximæ Dei laudes efflorescunt. CLERICUS in loc.

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'Ye shades, dispel!"—th' Eternal said;
At once th' involving darkness fled,
And nature sprung to light.

VI.

Whate'er a blooming world contains,
That wings the air, that skims the plains,
United praise bestow:
Ye dragons, sound his awful name
To heaven aloud; and roar acclaim,
Ye swelling deeps below.

VII.

Let every element rejoice:
Ye thunders, burst with awful voice
To him who bids you roll:
His praise in softer notes declare,
Each whisp'ring breeze of yielding air,
And breathe it to the soul.

VIII.

To him, ye graceful cedars, bow;
Ye tow'ring mountains, bending low,
Your great Creator own:
Tell, when affrighted nature shook,
How *Sinai* kindled at his look,
And trembled at his frown.

IX.

Ye flocks that haunt the humble vale,
Ye insects flutt'ring on the gale,
In mutual concourse rise;
Crop the gay rose's vermeil bloom,
And waft its spoils, a sweet perfume,
In incense to the skies.

X.

Wake, all ye mountain tribes, and sing;
Ye plumy warblers of the spring,
Harmonious anthems raise
To Him, who shap'd your finer mould,
Who tipp'd your glitt'ring wings of gold,
And tun'd your voice to praise.

XI.

Let man, by nobler passions sway'd,
The feeling heart, the judging head,
In heav'nly praise employ;
Spread his tremendous name around,
Till heav'n's broad arch rings back the sound,
The gen'ral burst of joy.

XII.

Ye, whom the charms of grandeur please,
Nurs'd on the downy lap of ease,
Fall prostrate at his throne;
Ye princes, rulers, all adore;
Praise him ye kings, who makes your pow'r
An image of his own.

XIII.

Ye fair, by nature form'd to move,
O praise th' eternal Source of love,
With youth's enliv'ning fire.
Let age take up the tuneful lay,
Sigh his bless'd name—then soar away,
And ask an angel's lyre.

PSALM CXLIX.

ARGUMENT.

THE children of Zion are excited, 1—3, to rejoice, and sing the praises of their King, on account, 4, of the salvation which he has already wrought for them, and which will hereafter be completed in them, when 5, they shall enter into his rest, and, 6—9, triumph with him over the persecuting powers of the world, and all the opposers of Christ, on whom will then be executed the judgment written. The Jews, mistaking, as usual, the time, place, and nature of Messiah's glorious kingdom, imagine this Psalm will receive its accomplishment, by their being made rulers of the nations, and lords of all things here below.

1. *Praise ye the* LORD: *Sing unto the* LORD *a new song*, and *his praise in the congregation of saints.* 2. *Let Israel rejoice in him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.* 3. *Let them praise his name in the dance: let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp.*

Christians are now the people, to whom belong the names and characters of "saints, Israel, and children of Zion." They "sing" this holy "song," as the Psalmist hath enjoined them to do. They sing it "new" in its evangelical sense, as new men, celebrating new victories, new and greater mercies, a spiritual salvation, an eternal redemption. They "rejoice" with hearts, voices, instruments, and every other token of joy, "in him who hath made" or created them again, in righteousness and true holiness; they are "joyful in their King," who hath himself overcome, and is now leading them on to final conquest and triumph, to honor and immortality.

4. *For the* LORD *taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation.* 5. *The saints* shall be joyful with glory: they shall sing aloud upon their beds*, or, *places of rest.*

Such "pleasure" the King of Zion taketh in his people, that he hath not disdained to become like one of them; to partake of their flesh and blood, and to give them his Spirit; he was made man, to purchase them by his death; and as a man, he is gone into heaven, to prepare a place for them. From thence he will return, to "beautify the meek with salvation," and place on the heads of his true disciples, the lowly, patient, and peaceable ones, a bright and incorruptible crown. Therefore are "the saints joyful in glory, they sing aloud;" in a state of perfect ease and security, resting from their labors, but not from their hallelujahs.

* In this verse, the Hebrew verbs are in the future time. In the verse following, the original hath no verb at all. The liberty is therefore taken to render them accordingly.

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6. *The high* praises *of God in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand;* 7. *To execute vengeance upon the heathen,* and *punishments upon the people;* 8. *To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron;* 9. *To execute upon them the judgment written: this honor have all his saints. Praise ye the* LORD.

To those who are SAINTS indeed, and who are acquainted with the genuine spirit of the Gospel, how obvious is it, that the scene, of which we have here a prophetical exhibition, is one that cannot take place till after the resurrection, because the followers of the Lamb have certainly nothing to do with vengeance in this world, though they are to judge, not only men, but angels, in the next, 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3; when they shall be called up to sit on thrones, as assessors, at the condemnation of their once-insulting persecutors, who will be cut asunder with the "two-edged sword," and bound with indissoluble "chains." Thus will be executed upon them the "eternal judgment written" and announced against the enemies of Messiah, in the Scriptures of truth. "This honor will all his saints THEN have."

PSALM CL.

ARGUMENT.

THE Psalmist exhorteth men to praise Jehovah, 1, for his holiness, and the firmament of his power, 2, for the wonders of his might, and for his excellent greatness, 3—5, with all kinds of music. 6, He concludeth his divine book of praises, by calling upon every thing that hath breath, to employ that breath in declaring the glory of him who gave it.

1. *Praise ye the* LORD. *Praise God in his sanctuary,* or, *for his holiness; praise him in,* or, *for, the firmament,* or, *expansion, of his power.*

If our translation be retained, the meaning is, that God should be praised in the "sanctuary," or temple, below, and likewise in "heaven" above; the former being planned and constructed as a resemblance of the latter. But the context rather, perhaps, requires us to suppose the Psalmist giving the reasons why God should be praised; namely, on account of his "holiness," and of his "power;" which power is more especially displayed in the formation of the "firmament," or "expansion," of the material heavens, and their incessant operations, by means of the light and air of which they are composed, upon the earth and all things therein. These are the appointed instruments of life and motion in the natural world, and they afford us some idea of that power of God unto salvation which is manifested in the church, by the effects produced on the souls of men, through the gracious influences of the LIGHT divine and the SPIRIT of holiness, constituting the "firmament of God's power" in the new creation.

2. *Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness.*

"Mighty" were the "acts" which God wrought for Israel, and "great" was the Holy One in the midst of his ancient people; but far mightier acts did he perform in Jesus Christ, for the redemption of the world; and more "excellent greatness" hath he manifested in the conversion of the nations, the overthrow of paganism, and the erection and preservation of the Christian church. O that her gratitude bore some proportion to his goodness!

3. *Praise him with the sound of the trumpet; praise him with the psaltery and harp.* 4. *Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs.* 5. *Praise him upon the loud cymbals; praise him upon the high sounding cymbals.*

It is impossible for us to distinguish and describe the several sorts of musical instruments here mentioned, as the Hebrews themselves acknowledge their ignorance in this particular. Thus much is clear, that the people of God are enjoined to use all the various kinds of them, in the performance of their divine services. And why should they not be so used under the Gospel? We read of sacred music before the law, in the instance of "Miriam, the prophetess, the sister of Aaron," who, to celebrate the deliverance from Pharaoh and the Egyptians, "took a timbrel in her hand, and the women went out after her, with timbrels and dances:" Exod. xv. 20. The custom, therefore, was not introduced by the law, nor abolished with it. Well regulated music, if ever it had the power of calming the passions, if ever it enlivened and exalted the affections of men in the worship of God (purposes for which it was formerly employed,) doubtless hath still the same power, and can still afford the same aids to devotion. When the beloved disciple was, in spirit, admitted into the celestial choir, he not only heard them "singing" hymns of praise, but he heard likewise "the voice of harpers harping upon their harps:" Rev. xiv. 2. And why that, which saints are represented as doing in heaven, should not be done, according to their skill and ability, by saints upon earth; or why instrumental music should be abolished as a legal ceremony, and vocal music, which was as much so, should

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be retained, no good reason can be assigned. Sacred music, under proper regulations, removes the hindrances of our devotion, cures the distractions of our thoughts, and banishes weariness from our minds. It adds solemnity to the public service, raises all the devout passions in the soul, and causes our duty to become our delight. "Of the pleasures of heaven," says the eloquent and elegant Bishop Atterbury, "nothing further is revealed to us, than that they consist in the practice of holy music, and holy love; the joint enjoyment of which, we are told, is to be the happy lot of all pious souls, to endless ages." It may be added, that there is no better method of combating the mischievous effects flowing from the abuse of music, than by applying it to its true and proper use. If the worshippers of Baal join in a chorus to celebrate the praises of their idol, the servants of Jehovah should drown it by one that is stronger and more powerful, in praise of him who made heaven and earth. If the men of the world rejoice in the object of their adoration, let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.

6. *Let every thing that hath breath praise the* LORD. *Praise ye the* LORD.

The breath of natural life, which God hath breathed into our nostrils, and the breath of that new and eternal life, which he hath given us through Christ Jesus our Lord, should be returned in hallelujahs. And then the church, composed of many and different members, all actuated like the pipes of a well-tuned organ, by the same spirit, and conspiring together in perfect harmony, would become one great instrument sounding forth the praises of God most high.

LET EVERY THING THAT HATH BREATH PRAISE THE LORD!—With this wish the sweet Psalmist of Israel closes the songs of Zion. With the same wish the author desires to close these meditations upon them; giving thanks to the Father of mercies, and the God of all comforts, by whose most gracious favor and aid they have been begun, continued, and ended; and humbly praying, that no errors, or improprieties, from which, through human infirmity, during the course of a long work, the most diligent and careful are not exempt, may prevent his labors from contributing, in some small degree, to promote the improvement and consolation of the redeemed, the honor and glory of the Redeemer, who is THE ROOT AND THE OFFSPRING OF DAVID, AND THE BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR.* AMEN.

* Rev. xxii. 16.

END OF VOLUME ONE.

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